

Lincoln Options Elementary Guide for New Families, 2017-2018

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Lincoln Options Elementary
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Welcome to Lincoln Options! We're thrilled that your family is now part of our vibrant community.

As your first year with us unfolds, we know you and your child will have a lot of questions. Prior to the start of the school year, you will receive The Lincoln Handbook, a document from the Lincoln Office titled "Daily Details," and other documents that contain in-depth information. Throughout the year, you will be receiving more detailed communication from your child's teacher, the staff, and the Options Community Council. This guide is intended to give you an overview of the school's operations and the events that make Lincoln special. Think of it as a quick-reference guide to use throughout your first year at the school.

The Lincoln community includes families of many sizes and configurations. Throughout this document, we use the term "parent" for ease and consistency in communication. We know that there are guardians, grandparents, and others who are the care providers for students at our school. When you see "parent," please know that all families are welcome and encouraged to participate in the Lincoln community!

We're looking forward to getting to know you and your child!

STARTING THE YEAR

Class and Supply Lists

MID- OR LATE AUGUST

The Wednesday after Labor Day is the first day of school. Class lists are sent out a week or two before school begins along with a copy of the first issue of the Opus, Lincoln's school newsletter. Each class list includes a short list of supplies that each child should bring with them at the beginning of the year. Lincoln supply lists are limited due to the school's fundraising efforts. When families supply these few items, teachers are able to stretch class funds for other enrichment and activities.

Back-to-School Potlucks

LAST WEEK OF AUGUST/FIRST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER

During the last week of summer break, each class has a back-to-school potluck so students and their families can meet their teacher, connect with new classmates and their families, and re-connect with old friends. You will also be able to meet representatives from the Options Community Council (see page 5). Potlucks take place the week before school starts. If possible, plan to be in town during this time so your child and family can participate – it's a wonderful time to socialize and get to know one another before spending the next few years together! At the class potlucks, each family has an informal picture taken to put up on the wall inside the school. If you miss the potluck, you can always bring in a family picture to add to the board!

Class Meetings

BEGINNING OF SEPTEMBER

Each teacher schedules a class meeting toward the beginning of the year to give parents/care-givers detailed information about the daily routine and a big picture for the coming year; expectations and responsibilities for students, parents and teachers; volunteer opportunities and expectations; and much more. Students are not part of the meetings so childcare is provided. This is your best and earliest opportunity to get a sense of what the school year will hold, and to make connections with your new community of parents and your child's teacher.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising efforts by Lincoln parents raise nearly \$30,000 of our Options Community Council (OCC) budget, providing for classroom funds and programs such as the Lincoln garden, the Spanish program, and Camp Elderberry. The Options program limits fundraising to two distinct efforts, the Program Fund and the Lincoln Auction. This keeps parents from having to participate in multiple, small sales throughout the year – at Lincoln you will not be asked to sell wrapping paper or candy bars. But we do ask that you make a one-time contribution (of any amount) and that you put your skills to work at the Lincoln Auction. Here are the details:

Program Fund

In the fall, Lincoln families are asked to make a one-time contribution to the school to help us meet our annual budget. Rather than a fixed dollar amount, our goal is 100% participation from Lincoln families. *Any* amount is welcome. With on-line giving options, you can also choose to give a small amount per month, either for the 10 months of the school year, or year-round. Over the summer, be thinking about what amount works best for your family budget. If you invest – even a small amount – you're invested!

Auction

The Lincoln Auction takes place in the spring with music, food, and loads of beautiful, useful, donated items for the silent and live auctions. We ask that every family do something to help make the Auction go! What can you do? Join the committee that pulls together details throughout the year. Contribute an item you've made. Donate an experience, such as an evening at your house with a Moroccan meal or breakdancing lessons. Use your technical skills to coordinate the payment system. Bake. Contact your favorite coffee shop or boutique to ask for a contribution. Invite your friends and neighbors – it's a public event! (Event information on page 7.)

DAILY

Recess

There are three recesses every day for Lincoln students. During recess, the students have several options, which include going outside, to the library, or (during morning recess only) to the cafeteria for Art Cart. Special curriculum/events such as Samba, Choir, Orchestra for fourth and fifth graders, and Band for fifth graders are also available to the students if they choose to

participate. Students are encouraged to go outside during at least one recess, so be sure that your child is dressed appropriately for all kinds of weather.

The playground is divided into “zones” with a paraeducator assigned to each zone to monitor children. The paraeducators’ primary role is to ensure safety and to keep their eyes and ears open for unsafe situations or behaviors. During the first week of school, the paraeducators visit each classroom and introduce themselves so your child will know who they can go to for help if they are hurt or in trouble.

Bathroom

New students, particularly kindergartners, may be surprised that they are expected to use the bathroom independently. Teachers give students permission to leave the classroom, when appropriate, and use the bathrooms, one of which is located on each floor. Please remember, particularly in the beginning of the year and/or if this is new for your young child, that it is best for them to wear clothes that are easy to navigate. For younger children, pack an extra set of clothes for their cubby or backpack. A few pieces of emergency clothing are available in the office. Adults are not allowed in the kids’ bathrooms. An adult bathroom is located on each floor.

Meals

Full-day students at Lincoln have a choice to bring lunch from home or to purchase a district lunch from the cafeteria. Breakfast is also available for purchase. Half-day kindergarten students do not eat lunch at school.

If your child brings a lunch to school, there will be a system in the classroom to help them keep track of it and locate it when it’s time to eat.

For school lunches, there is a payment system through the district. To add funds to your child’s account, use the lunch envelopes in the office, located on the wall to the left of the visitor sign-in sheet. Put your cash or check in the envelope, fill out the appropriate information on the front, and place it in the basket on Wendy Trevorror’s desk. It will be deposited quickly into your child’s account. Payments may also be made online through Family Access. (There is a service fee. You will receive more information about this online service from the district after the school year begins). If the account is empty, or negative, you will receive a phone call and email from the school district notifying you of the status of the account.

Free and reduced lunches are also available. At the start of the school year, watch for information on this program.

During lunch, your child uses a designated lunch card with their name on it to pay for lunch. Sometimes children decide to purchase a lunch from the cafeteria even if they have a packed lunch from home. If you need help with this, you may have their card removed so they are not able to purchase lunch without a parental note giving permission. Work with Brenda Young, cafeteria services, to manage this or any other meal-related concerns.

Students have approximately 25 minutes for lunch, so packed lunches should be simple to open and quick to eat. There is no way to re-heat food. Youngers have snack time in the morning and in the afternoon. In some classes, families provide snacks for their children individually. In others, parents sign up to provide snacks for the whole class once or twice during the year. **Lincoln is a peanut-free school.**

Nurse's Office

Lincoln Elementary has a district nurse who rotates through several schools, so a nurse is not on site every day. The paraeducators and Wendy Trevorrow are able to provide basic nursing services for your child if needed. This includes care for minor cuts, administering medication, taking your child's temperature, and addressing minor discomfort or pain.

If medication is needed for your child, including over-the-counter medications and topical creams, it must be given to the nurse to administer along with an Authorization to Administer Medications Form signed by you and your healthcare giver. Check with the office to obtain the proper form. Students are not allowed to take medications themselves or carry them with them or in a backpack unless authorized by a healthcare professional.

Sick Days and Planned Absences

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness or an appointment, call the school attendance line at **360-596-6403**. Please do not call the main line to report attendance. If you are planning for your student/s to be out of school for non-illness related reasons for three or more consecutive days, see the office to fill out the appropriate paperwork. At the start of the school year, more information will be available in the Daily Details document from the office.

Before- and After-School Care

The YMCA offers for-pay, ongoing care on the Lincoln premises before and after school. It is not a drop-in service. You can sign your child up for Y-Care any time during the summer by stopping into a YMCA branch and filling out a Y-Care form. For more information, call the South Sound YMCA at 360-753-6576.

Beginning-of-Day and End-of-Day Plans

Class begins at 8:40. Students may arrive five minutes before the start of the school day. Please refrain from earlier drop-offs to give your child's teacher time to make final preparations for the day. Students may not be dropped off early to wait in the office for class to start.

Half-day kindergarten students are released at 11:20. All other students are released at 3:02 on most days at Lincoln Elementary (see Early Release Days below). **All times are subject to change by the district.** At the end of the day, children are either picked up, walk home, take the bus, or walk to Y-Care. Your teacher may ask you to indicate your end-of-day plan in advance, including where they go after school and/or who is picking them up each day. Names of all adults picking up children at the end of the day must be listed on the appropriate form in the office.

Half-Day Wednesdays

Lincoln does **NOT** observe the monthly, district-wide late early-release days on the first Wednesday of every month. If your child takes the bus, you will need to arrange for alternate transportation from school on these days. Morning buses will run on schedule.

Early-Release Days

Lincoln's schedule is unique in that approximately every other Friday, students are released from school at 12:32 to allow for teacher training and collaboration. A volunteer group of parents work to organize a variety of supervised activities for your children that need care during early release afternoons, ranging from art classes and computer skills to science and soccer. Early Release Activities occur between 12:32 and 3:02, to coincide with the typical end of the school day for full-day students. Half-day kindergarten students do not participate in Early Release activities. A permission slip is sent home prior to each Early Release with a list of activities and a suggested donation. If your child wishes to participate, fill out the form and return to the office with any appropriate payment. Afternoon bus service runs at the Early Release time, NOT at 3:02. Since this program cannot accommodate Lincoln's entire student population, this service is intended only for families who need it.

Additionally, the district has scheduled two Friday half-days, and Tuesday through Friday of conference weeks are half days. Dismissal on these days is 11:45. On these days, there is no half-day kindergarten and Lincoln will not sponsor Early Release Activities.

Bus Service

In a number of neighborhoods, bus service for Lincoln students is available through the school district. Visit <http://osd.wednet.edu/departments/transportation> for bus route information. For questions, call the OSD Transportation Department at 360-596-7700. Their office closes at 2:00 during summer months.

Safety and Preparedness

All classrooms practice safety drills throughout the year, including safe practice exiting the building. The school is equipped with emergency supplies including snacks, water, blankets, and first aid supplies. The staff also has an up-to-date communications plan tailored for emergency situations.

COMMUNITY

Options Community Council (OCC)

The Options Community Council is a not-for-profit organization comprised of parents, teacher representatives, and a community representative. The organization's purpose is to support educational opportunities for children in the Lincoln community such as the garden, Spanish program, Camp Elderberry, and funds for teachers to use for classroom enrichment. (See below for more details on volunteering.)

Assembly

One morning each week, usually Friday, at 9 am, the Lincoln community gathers in the gymnasium for a focusing on kindness, learning, and celebration. Classes often perform a song or poem, students prepare a readers' theater piece, or individual students read their original works. The Parent Band is another vibrant part of assembly, leading students in songs that celebrate the Earth and our unique community. Assembly is always open to (and well attended by) parents and families. Join in when you can!

Buddies

Each child at Lincoln is assigned an older or younger buddy from a buddy classroom. Older and younger buddies sit together at assembly and may have reading time or other activities together. Buddies are meant to foster connections between age groups, give new or younger students a friendly face to turn to, and give older students an opportunity to act as helpers.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences occur during two weeks of the year. In order to accommodate teacher conferences, Tuesdays through Fridays of conference week days are half days. On these half days, there is no half-day kindergarten.

Conferences are a chance to work with your child and the teacher to set goals and check on progress. Parents and children attend the conference together and the conversation is focused on goals articulated between your child and the teacher. Conferences are approximately 20 minutes long so there is a lot to discuss in a short amount of time! Being on time and prepared with focused questions will help you make the most efficient use of this time. If you need private conferences to discuss your child's development, schedule them individually with your child's teacher.

VOLUNTEERING

Lincoln is based on a vibrant culture of family participation and volunteering. Parents and family have a wide variety of opportunities to participate in the educational process, from direct interactions in the classroom to support with special projects and events. Parents are encouraged to volunteer **four hours each month**. Lincoln has developed a handbook of guidelines titled "Volunteers in the Classroom" that provides a complete outline of volunteer opportunities. A copy is available in the office. All volunteers **MUST** complete a Volunteer Application and be cleared before working with students (this can be done online through the district website: <http://osd.wednet.edu/>). This process is required annually. Here are a few highlights:

Options Community Council Positions

Dive in and volunteer for an OCC position, a spot on a committee, or a classroom representative slot. There are four main offices available, each for a two-year term: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Each classroom also has a representative on the Council. A full list of positions is included in the Lincoln Handbook. The OCC meets the second and fourth Tuesday

evening of every month throughout the school year. Some committees will have extra meetings during certain times of the year, particularly those tied with special events.

Classroom help

Parents can sign up to volunteer in the classroom to assist teachers with projects and instruction. Help may include simple tasks such as sharpening pencils and making copies, or more in-depth help such as working one-on-one with a student or coordinating an all-class project. There are a variety of tasks you can tackle if you're not available during school hours, such as shopping for supplies or making phone calls to other parents to remind them of an event.

Field Trips

Teachers rely heavily on parents to assist with children during field trips. It's a fun way to connect with your child and their classmates! Sign up to drive children to a site or walk with the class to nearby neighborhood. You may learn something about salmon or Washington State history, too!

Garden

The Lincoln garden is a cornerstone of the Lincoln community. It takes many hands to make it successful. Volunteer opportunities include weekend garden projects, helping kids plant, weed, or harvest during class time, assisting with the plant sale, or summer caretaking. The OCC Garden Committee is very active in organizing garden projects and volunteer opportunities. You can be a garden representative for your classroom, or you can request to be added to their email group so you get notifications of different opportunities.

Fundraising

Extra enrichment opportunities at Lincoln are supported entirely through special fundraising events. If you can't spare daytime hours in the classroom, volunteering to help on the OCC fundraising committee, at the Lincoln Auction, or the Used Book and Toy Sale are other important ways to participate. It's a great way to volunteer on your own time and get to know other parents in the community.

Other Support

At your class meeting in the beginning of the year, you will discuss the needs of your child's teacher. There will be an opportunity to sign up for different tasks, including formal classroom roles (class representative to OCC or garden representative), regular classroom volunteering, or help with projects or special units. If you are looking to increase your volunteer commitment, simply email or call your teacher and they will be happy to plug you in where assistance is needed!

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the cornerstone of any successful school experience, and also one of the most challenging. Our goal is to have clear and transparent interactions with parents and

students. Creativity in communication and planning is the key to understanding your child's needs, addressing your concerns, and getting answers to general questions.

If there is a behavior issue or other challenge, teachers will communicate with you through written notes, emails, or phone calls. Simple issues or one-time events may be handled between your child and a teacher or the principal. If the issue continues to crop up, parents will be notified, but the community model for this school allows for minor issues to be worked out between the parties in a way that helps them be accountable to each other. If you are concerned about an event, contact your child's teacher or the principal, Marcela Abadi.

While trying to welcome or dismiss the children for the day, teachers are often surrounded by students and parents. You may need to wait a few minutes to touch base with your child's teacher. Teachers are generally available after school, by appointment. Email works well for most teachers if you have a quick question or would like to set a time for a larger conversation.

EVENTS

Lincoln has **three major community events**: Harvest Festival, Theme Night, and Camp Elderberry. We also have a **major fundraising event**: the Auction.

Harvest Festival

LATE SEPTEMBER/EARLY OCTOBER

Each year the Lincoln community celebrates the harvest of our own garden and the bounty of the season in a morning event on an early-release Friday in the fall. All students gather for an assembly and are then released to participate in outdoor activities and crafts such as cider pressing, woodworking, mud pie construction, doll making, and hay jumping.

Parents, especially those of kindergarteners, should be present to help their kids navigate the activities and to play together. It's great fun but also very busy. Teachers do their best to make sure all kids feel prepared for this exciting event but it can be easy for younger kids to feel overwhelmed. If you can't be there, please arrange for another parent or family member to take your child under their wing for the event.

A highlight is the Harvest Festival meal, prepared by our kids and using ingredients straight from the Lincoln garden! Kids eat with their families. Serving everyone can be tricky, so be patient with long lines or beat the lines by eating as soon as the kitchen opens.

The Used Book and Toy Sale

FIRST WEEKEND OF NOVEMBER

Lincoln's library is kept ship-shape largely through funds raised at the annual Used Book and Toy Sale. This event usually takes place the first weekend of November. The Lincoln community donates books and toys and parent volunteers organize items and staff the sale.

In the weeks leading up to the sale, the library needs help organizing all the fantastic book donations. *Any* amount of time (even 10 minutes right after drop-off) helps out a lot. The week of the sale, volunteers transform the gymnasium by setting up tables, arranging and organizing books, and displaying toys. On Friday, before the sale is open to the public, doors are open to Lincoln families only. Allowance money goes a long way here so bring the kids, get good stuff, and support the school!

The Auction

EARLY SPRING

The Auction is not only a great opportunity to help, it's important! Proceeds from the Auction historically funds nearly 75% of the entire Options Community Council budget.

A small committee gets the ball rolling early in the school year. By December, a larger group of parent volunteers starts meeting and soliciting donations from local businesses, coordinating class donations, planning the bake sale, and *much* more. For one-time volunteers, there are many ways to help out on the day of the event, such as selling tickets, staffing tables, or running credit card purchases.

The Auction event is a fun gathering, with food and drinks, held off-site. Childcare is available for a small fee. Organize, attend, serve, bid, and have fun!

Theme Night

MID-SPRING

Each year Lincoln has a school-wide theme that teachers weave into their lesson plans. Starting sometime after Winter Break, students begin work on a project based on this theme. Each classroom's projects explore the theme from a slightly different angle. Your child's teacher will send home information about any work that need to be completed at home. On Theme Night the whole Lincoln community comes together to celebrate with an assembly, classroom gatherings, presentations, and project viewing. For a portion of the evening, all the classrooms are open so anyone can walk through and admire the students' hard work.

Camp Elderberry

LATE MAY OR EARLY JUNE

Near the end of the school year the entire Lincoln community gathers for an all-day field trip we call Camp Elderberry. This takes place at Panhandle Lake in Shelton on a Friday, typically in late May or early June. The camp is about a 45-minute drive from the school.

Students and parents meet in their classrooms the morning of the event for time together and to go over details for the day. Everyone is dismissed for camp at the same time. Students whose parents are unable to attend are assigned carpools with parent volunteer drivers.

The kids are assigned several outdoor activities during the day, focusing on crafts and outdoor play. Staff and parents lead activities, oversee logistics, help out with the evening potluck, and enjoy the view of the lake from the lawn. Younger siblings are welcome but do not participate in camp activities. Some years, a play place for toddlers and preschoolers is set up, depending

on volunteer interest. The day concludes with a giant potluck dinner and the fifth grade graduation ceremony. Families leave whenever they see fit. Many families choose to stay overnight in tents, campers, or in the camp's open-air cabins. For a lot of families, this is a special time to gather around campfires, roast marshmallows, sing, talk, and bond.

Students are in the care of the school during school hours and are signed out to a parent or guardian by 4:00. If you cannot be present, arrange for a relative or friend to be present in order to sign your child out of school and be responsible for them in the afternoon and during the potluck. If this is not possible, you can sign your child up to be transported back to Lincoln via carpool. We hope you're able to make arrangements early in the school year to take the day off and join the community for this day of fun and open air, creative play!