Welcome to John D. Runkle School. We’re glad you’re here!

Whether your family is joining us in Kindergarten or transferring into a later grade, it’s natural to be nervous on your first day of school. The Runkle PTO Welcome Wagon is here to help you get to know the Runkle community and to make your family’s transition into our school easy and enjoyable... We’re sure you’ll fit right in!

This Survival Guide is designed to help you along the way. It’s filled with lots of useful information about our school, our town, and local events, resources and opportunities.

We’re very proud of our community and all it has to offer, and we hope you’ll love it here as much as we do. If we haven’t already met, we look forward to meeting you. In the meantime, if there is anything we can do to help you, please feel free to let us know. We’re happy to help in any way we can.

- The Runkle PTO
THE PTO (PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION)

The Runkle PTO is an organization of teachers and parents working together to support and enrich Runkle School academically, culturally, and financially. All parents are automatically members of the PTO, and everyone is encouraged to participate in PTO activities.

PTO volunteers organize a variety of school and community activities and events each year; and the PTO Annual Fund supports a range of school programs and purchases. Examples of these include:

- PAAR (Performing Arts at Runkle)
- Subsidizing cost of school field trips
- Ice Skating Night
- Math and Science Night
- Runkle PTO website
- Astronomy Night
- Candy House Decorating
- Parent & Teacher Curriculum Grants
- Runkle News Email Bulletin
- Welcome Wagon for new families
- Author visits
- Classroom supply stipends
- International Potluck Night
- Recess equipment for each class
- Runkle PTO Family Directory
- Bingo Night
- Halloween Fair
- Library books and e-Readers
- Music and Arts Festival
- & more!

THE RUNKLE PTO WELCOME WAGON

As a way of helping transfer students get used to Runkle, and the opportunities in and around Brookline, the Runkle PTO Welcome Wagon connects new families with “Go To Families” to help answer questions and assist with the transition. For additional information on the PTO Welcome Wagon talk to the coordinator listed on the back of this guide.

THE RUNKLE PTO FAMILY DIRECTORY

An essential resource for every Runkle family is the PTO’s annual Family Directory, which is usually available in November. The Directory includes most Runkle family names and addresses, but it goes beyond that. It provides a wealth of information about the PTO, staff and faculty contacts, the school council, and other school programs.

If you’re joining us at the beginning of the year, you should automatically receive a form from the school office requesting information for the Directory. **Please fill out and return these forms** as quickly as possible to ensure that you will be listed in the Directory. Listing your family in the Runkle Family Directory is voluntary and free of charge. If you choose not to be listed though, you will not receive a copy.

The Runkle Family Directory is strictly for Runkle community purposes (i.e., contacting other parents to arrange social activities like play dates, birthday parties, school community building events, etc.). It may not be used for solicitation or commercial purposes.
There are many ways for parents to get involved and help make the environment at Runkle as rich as possible for our children. If you’ve got an idea, something you’d like to share, or if you just want to lend a helping hand, please get in touch. We’d love to hear from you! Here are some good ways to stay informed and involved at Runkle:

Visit www.runkle.org - The school website includes student resources, news and events, the school calendar, recent and past editions of the Runkle News, and other messages from the school. It’s a great site to get to know.

Sign Up for Classroom Emails - While many events at Runkle involve the whole school, there’s a lot going on in each classroom as well. Make sure you contact your Runkle Room Parent to sign up for classroom email announcements so you’ll know about classroom visits, special projects, and student presentations.

Read the Runkle News - The PTO’s email newsletter is a great way to stay informed! It includes a calendar of events, messages from the Principal, the staff, and the PTO, as well as Brookline community notices and some local classified ads. To sign up for the Runkle News, visit runkle.org and click on the Runkle News Subscription link.

Enjoy PTO Events - PTO events—like the Halloween Fair and International Potluck Night—are well attended and happen almost every month. We encourage new families to attend and new parents to volunteer. PTO events are a great way to enhance your time at Runkle and to build community spirit.

Be Active in the PTO - All parents automatically become part of the PTO when their children start school. Being active in the PTO—attending meetings, volunteering at events, or even creating a new activity—is a great way to get involved in the school. We’re always open to new people, new ideas, and suggestions for improvement. How much you get involved is up to you!

Keep Up to Date with Runkle’s Online Calendar - Runkle’s complete calendar is available online on runkle.org, as well as in the Runkle Family Directory. Online calendars are updated regularly to reflect new events and schedule changes.

If you’re joining Runkle at the beginning of the school year, the Runkle PTO has some great events just for you:

Welcome Wagon Gatherings & the Popsicle Party - These are occasions for new families, with children in grades 1–8, to meet other families, the principal, and the vice principal in an informal setting before school begins. Check runkle.org for the date of this year’s Popsicle Party; it usually starts at 5:30pm in the playground.

Back-to-School Picnic - This is held early in September on the Runkle Field. Pack a picnic dinner or pizza and a blanket and join us! This evening brings the whole school community together in the schoolyard to greet old friends and meet new ones.

PTO Open Houses - Runkle PTO sponsors morning (8:05 am) and evening (5:30 pm) Open Houses in the cafeteria. These are opportunities to find out more about the activities, after-school programs, and committees at Runkle. There is also a Welcome Coffee in the Runkle Peace Garden on the first day of the school, and monthly informational sessions, after drop-off, to provide parents and caregivers a chance to meet each other and chat informally. In addition, several grades have coffee get-togethers, at families’ homes, which are an excellent opportunity to catch up with other parents.

Potluck Suppers - Sponsored by one family in each grade, Runkle Potluck Suppers are a very popular school tradition; and a great way for parents to get to know each other without the kids. Please check your Room Parent emails and the first issues of the Runkle News for the dates of this fall’s suppers.

English Language Learners (ELL) Open House - Held in the fall of each year the ELL Open House is a great opportunity for ELL parents to get to know each other, to learn more about Runkle School, and to see student work.
PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN YOUR CHILD’S SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Parents can play an active role in their children’s schooling and education at Runkle. It’s fun, it helps your child succeed academically and socially, and it gives you a chance to get to know the teachers, faculty, and other parents.

Attend Class Open Houses / “Morning Shares” - This is an important time for your child to share schoolwork and completed projects with you. If you are not able to attend an open house, you may arrange for another interested adult to be there for your child, if possible. These events, usually start 15 to 30 minutes before school and last between 30 and 45 minutes.

Kindergarten Snuggle and Read - Kindergarten parents are invited into the classroom, typically once a month, to stay and read with their child for 15 to 20 minutes before teacher-led instruction begins. Any adult is welcome to read with a child, including caretakers, grandparents, and grown siblings.

Grade K–2 Morning Meetings - Parents with children in Grades K–2 are invited to attend meetings on the first Thursday of each month in the Multi Purpose Room at 8:05am. Morning Meetings give parents and caretakers an opportunity to observe their child's class, faculty, and administration in action!

Grade 6–8 Back to School Night - This is an evening meeting for parents of children in Grades 6–8, during the second or third week of school, to meet teachers, discuss the format and curriculum of classes, and expectations for the students.

Become a Room Parent - Each classroom has Room Parents who provide support to the teacher, communicate with other parents, and help with other tasks. Room parents also organize gifts for the class.

Join the PTO as a Board Member or Member-at-Large - The PTO meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 8:05-9:30. Check the Runkle Family Directory for a list of current board members, members-at-large, and event coordinators.

Grade 5/6 & 8/9 Transition Meetings - These meetings for parents of children in Grades 5 and 8 are scheduled towards the end of each school year and usually occur during the school day. They’re designed to help students and parents understand the significant changes, in format and curriculum, that will occur for students entering Grade 6 at Runkle and Grade 9 (Freshman Year) in high school.

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Grades K–5: Children in Grades K–5 receive written reports on student performance, coupled with formal parent and teacher conferences. Formal conferences occur twice during the year, in November-December and March-April. Conferences are scheduled directly by classroom teachers so keep an eye out for their email invitations.

At the formal conferences, teachers provide a report of your child’s academic performance. The autumn conference is typically a time to discuss how your child is progressing and how you might support your child at home. Come prepared with observations, questions, and suggestions. The spring conference offers information about your child’s progress and an opportunity to discuss your child’s needs for the next school year. Information shared in conferences is private.

Many teachers also ask for brief, informal meetings during the first months of school to get to know you and your child better. Informal meetings with your child’s teacher provide an opportunity for you to share what kind of student and person your child is, and provide information about your child’s strengths and challenges as well as any other insights. Expect to talk about your child at these conferences, rather than learn from the teacher about their performance in school.

Grades 6–8: Students in Grades 6–8 receive four report cards per year; as well as four interim progress reports (IPRs) that explain how your child is doing mid-quarter and what their grades will likely be if they continue to perform in the same manner. IPRs should be used as an opportunity to help your child make changes in their approach to their schoolwork and for conversation with teachers on an as-needed basis. Separate grades are provided to evaluate your child’s academic performance, effort, and classroom behavior.
Periodically, parents will be invited to come to school, usually before the regular start of the school day, but sometimes in the evening, to view major student projects. At the end of the school year, students have the opportunity to show portfolios of their schoolwork to their parents.

Grade 6 is a transition year in which students receive written reports with grades as well as formal parent-teacher conferences with the teachers of all your child’s academic subjects. By Grade 7, the school no longer initiates formal conferences with parents. All teachers are available to meet and discuss student progress if there is concern at any point in the school year. Since formal conferences are no longer initiated by the school in Grades 7–8, it is very important that you contact your child’s teacher to set up an appointment—through email, by phone, or during their office hours—if you have any information to share or any concern you would like to discuss.

**Special Needs:** If your child has a special learning style, experiences academic or social difficulties, or needs additional support, please contact their classroom teacher, their age group’s guidance counselor, or a representative from Runkle’s English Language Learners (ELL) Program, the Special Needs Program, the METCO Program, or (if your child has an Individual Education Plan) their IEP Team Leader. Addressing issues early in your child’s school career often yields the best results. All discussions with school staff about your child are confidential.

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**CURRICULUM UNITS IN BROOKLINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

All public schools in Brookline share curricula for primary content areas like Literacy, Mathematics, Educational Technology & Libraries, Languages, Performing Arts, Physical Education, Science, Social Studies, Visual Arts, etc.

You’ll learn about the specifics for your child’s curriculum at the class open houses for younger children, or the Back to School Night for children in Grades 6–8; but we’ve included samples of recent topics from four common content areas on the next page.

**LITERACY**  **MATHEMATICS**  **SCIENCE**  **SOCIAL STUDIES**

To learn more about our shared curriculum visit the Public Schools of Brookline website http://brookline.k12.ma.us and click on the Students & Families Curriculum link.
What happens if my child is late to school or absent? Your child is considered tardy if they arrive after 8:00am. If they are tardy they must sign in at the desk near the front office before going to their classroom. Those who do not sign in will be marked absent. If your child is going to miss school or be late for any reason, make sure to call the school’s Absence & Tardy Line at (617) 879-4249 before the start of the school day to let the office know. Starting at 8:30am, the school will call all families whose children are absent or tardy.

How can I talk to my child’s teacher about concerns or questions? You may set up a meeting with a teacher before or after school, or leave messages in the teacher’s mailbox in the main office, on their voice mail, or their email. Drop-off and pick-up times are NOT good times for talking at length with teachers, who are often busy with the class and unable to speak privately.

How do snow days work? Snow days are announced on AM radio stations WBZ 1030, WEEI 850, and WRKO 680; and on television channels 4, 5, and 7. Be careful not to mistake closings in Brookline NH for those in Brookline MA!

School delays and closures, as well as changes to other organized school activities, are also announced via automated phone calls and email messages from the town. In some instances weather related schedule changes are made at the last minute, so make sure to be alert for unexpected changes on days with inclement weather. Snow days are rescheduled for the end of the school year, to ensure coverage of the material missed, which can extend the date of the last day of school by as much as a week.

What happens on my child’s birthday at school? During morning announcements, on your child’s birthday or on the nearest school day to their birthday, your child will be invited to come to the main office to receive a “Happy Birthday!” ribbon. Birthday parties cannot be held at school; however, many families celebrate their child's birthday with classmates at parties outside of school. Party invitations may not be distributed at school.

What are Early Release & Conference Dismissal Days? School ends shortly after lunch, at 12:40pm, on Conference Dismissal Days so that teachers may meet for professional development, hold parent-teacher conferences, or take part in other educational pursuits. There are four Conference Dismissal Days in the fall and four in the spring, usually on Wednesdays or Thursdays. There is also an Early Release Day, at 12:00pm, on the day before Thanksgiving. Students in Grades 7–8 have slightly fewer Conference Dismissal Days. All early Release & Conference Dismissal Days are identified on the school calendar and announced in the Runkle News.

What are the typical holiday / vacation days at Runkle? All schools in Brookline follow the same district holiday calendar with schools closed each year on Labor Day, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Martin Luther King Day, Good Friday, and Memorial Day. In addition longer vacations are scheduled around Thanksgiving, the end of the year, and February and April vacation weeks.

How does lunch work at Runkle? Students have about 20 minutes to eat lunch plus 15 to 20 minutes of recess before or after lunch. Students are supervised by Runkle staff at recess and are not allowed to eat during this time. Children may bring their lunch from home or purchase a cafeteria meal. A link to the monthly menu is available on runkle.org.

Lunch (and breakfast before school), are available for sale at subsidized prices in the Runkle Cafeteria. Milk and snack items may be purchased separately. All eligible children may participate in the free and reduced lunch program. For information, and to apply to participate in the program, please contact the school’s front office. All information on participation in this program is kept strictly confidential.

Every Runkle child is assigned a cafeteria account number with a 4- or 5-digit PIN access code to pay for their food. The cafeteria will not accept cash as payment for food. Parents pay into their child’s account by cash or check, payable to Brookline School Food Services (BSFS), delivered to the cafeteria in the morning, or by credit card online at myschoolbucks.com. Children tell the cafeteria cashier their account number to pay for their food, and parents are notified by email or phone call when the cafeteria account is depleted. Parents may view a list of their child’s purchases. To learn more about BSFS, visit http://www.brookline.k12.ma.us

Will my child be offered any field trips? Teachers sometimes schedule field trips to museums and other local sites, such as the Arnold Arboretum, Plimouth Plantation, and Georges Island. In addition children in Grades 7–8 are offered special overnight trips. Most field trips take place during school hours and parent volunteers are often required as chaperons. Parents must complete a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Form, available in the school’s main office, prior to being allowed to accompany field trips.

The PTO underwrites a portion of the cost of field trips for each grade; and parents are sometimes asked to contribute for additional expenses. Forms will come home for approval and payment, if required, about one week before the field trip. If the cost of the trip is an economical hardship, parents may make a confidential application for PTO-provided financial assistance through the class teacher or guidance counselor.
What is RAFT?
RAFT (Recreation Activities for Teens) is a teen-centered program, run by the Brookline Recreation Department, that offers dances and trips for students in Grades 6–8 who attend school OR live in Brookline. The program schedule varies with a Drop-In Center on Friday afternoons and evenings, bi-monthly dances, and monthly weekend day trips. RAFT is designed to be a safe and supervised way for middle school children to hang out with their old friends and meet ones.

To join RAFT there is a $10 annual membership fee plus a fee for each dance and trip. The Drop-In Center is FREE. RAFT members will receive a monthly activities newsletter. To learn more about RAFT and to register, visit the Brookline Recreation Department website at brooklinerec.com. Financial assistance is available.

What are RASP & RED?
RASP is the Runkle After-School Program, a parent-run organization that offers after-school classes for a fee. RED is the Runkle Extended Day program, a parent-run corporation established to provide quality after-school childcare programs for Kindergartners through fifth-graders at Runkle School. You can learn more about RASP and RED in the Runkle Family Directory, at the After School link on runkle.org, or at the websites linked below.

RASP http://www.runkleafterschoolprogram.org
RED http://runkleextendedday.com

What extracurricular activities are available outside of school?
There are many sports, music, and arts offerings in and around Brookline, providing something for everyone.

Many families enroll their children in soccer, baseball, flag football and other sports run by the Brookline Recreation Department. This is a lovely way to get to know other kids and parents. These sports offerings are often geared for fun rather than competition. Games generally take place on weekend days, and there is usually a weekly practice. You are eligible to enroll if you live OR attend school in Brookline. There are also traveling sports teams for Grades 7–8 that compete against teams from other towns. Teams are selected from all Brookline schools based on ability and sports vary from year to year.

In addition to weekly sporting events, the Brookline Recreation Department sponsors swimming lessons, family days, ice skating, art activities, nature hikes and walks, and much more. A printed catalog of activities is available in locations around town and online at brooklinerec.com. You can enroll for Brookline Recreation Department programs online. If the enrollment deadline has passed or you have any questions, contact the office directly at (617) 277-3722. Financial assistance is available upon request.

The activities listed here are not an exhaustive list so please check with classmates, friends, teachers, and Room Parents for other ideas about local arts organizations, clubs, sports, music, and educational opportunities.

What should I do if I move or need to update my contact information?
If you move, or your phone or other contact information changes, contact the main office secretary so that the school is aware of the change.

Who can answer my other questions?
If you have other questions about Runkle School, the town of Brookline, or even the way things are said and done in the United States, just get in touch with your “Go To Family,” your child’s room parent, or any member of the PTO.
SCHOOL RESOURCES

Your Child’s Teacher: For anything related to your child’s school work.
School Secretary: Beatrice Moyer for anything related to Runkle School, particularly procedures and logistics.
Guidance Counselors: Lauren Vulcano (Grades K–2) and Rebecca Sneider (Grades 3–8) for anything related to academic, personal, and/or social concerns of your child or your family. Guidance counselors are the primary resource for children, parents, and teachers.
School Nurse: Janet Campbell for anything related to your child’s health.
Vice Principal: Donna Finnegan for Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan/OLWEUS.
Principal: Jim Stoddard for concerns not addressed by other Runkle staff.
Director Of English Language Learners (ELL) Program At Runkle: Lauren Carroll for anything related to your child’s school experience.
METCO Coordinator At Runkle: Marcia Brown for anything related METCO.
Education Specialist And Individual Education Plan (IEP) Team Leader for anything related to your child’s academic progress if on an IEP.

Note: The Runkle Family Directory contains a complete, updated list of all teaching and support professionals at Runkle. Please provide your contact information so you will receive a copy.

TIPS, INFORMATION & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Read the School Handbook and the Runkle Directory! The first is required by the school; the second has a lot of useful information.

Entering the school building during school hours: Doors automatically lock at about 8:00am and reopen at about 2:10pm. To enter the school building during the day, go to the main entrance on Druce Street and press the security buzzer to be allowed in. Upon entering the school all visitors are required to check in at the main office and receive a visitors badge.

Parking at Runkle: Unless otherwise posted there is a 2-hour parking limit on all streets in Brookline. Streets around Runkle have specific signage for school hours. Please read signs carefully and be mindful of driveways, etc.

There is live parking for pick up/drop off as well as a bus zone and reserved parking for alternative fuel and carpool vehicles Mon-Fri., 7:00am-3:00pm along Druce Street outside the main entrance. There is additional parking, with a 15 minute limit between 7:00-9:00am and 2:00-3:00pm, along Clinton Road. There is a bus zone near the Clinton driveway to the school playground. One side of Chesham Road has no parking at all times and the school side has 30 minute limits between 7:00-9:00am and 2:00-3:00pm.

Police crossing guards are posted at the intersections of Dean/Buckminster Rd, Dean/Clinton Rd and Dean/Beacon St during drop off and pick up times.

Parking in Brookline: In Brookline, there is no on-street parking from 2:00am-6:00am. If you do park on the street during those times, you will be ticketed. Parking regulations are strictly enforced in Brookline. You can get a visitors’ parking permit for certain municipal parking lots for guests. Brookline is well situated in terms of public transportation by bus and rapid transit (the “T”). ZipCars are also available in various spots around town for short term rentals.

Babysitting Services/Options: We suggest you ask for sitter recommendations from neighbors or friends. Many families use sitters from their neighborhood or from one of the local colleges or universities. Most of the local colleges and universities have a website or office that connects potential sitters with prospective families. There are also several nanny services available in the area for families who require them.

Brookline Public Libraries: All town libraries offer programming for toddlers and kids under age 10, such as story hour, age-appropriate book clubs, movies, and workshops. The Brookline Library also offers teen-specific programming during the school year and summer. A separate young adult section of the library focuses on teen book clubs, activities, an anime club, and a teen Library Advisory Group. Library services are free of charge to those with a library card. For details on library programs and how to join, visit brooklinelibrary.org or www.mln.lib.ma.us.

Brookline Public Schools: www.brookline.k12.ma.us (617) 730-2401
Brookline Recreation Department: www.brooklinerec.com (617) 730-2069
PTO Welcome Wagon Coordinator
Karla Schallies: karla.schallies@gmail.com

2015-2016 PTO Co-Chairs
Catherine Burke & Lynne Chuang

WE’D BE HAPPY TO TRANSLATE THIS BROCHURE FOR YOU!
If you’d like to get this brochure translated, contact the Welcome Wagon Coordinator (above) and we’ll be happy to help!

THIS GUIDE MADE POSSIBLE BY THE RUNKLE PTO ANNUAL FUND.

The Runkle PTO charges no dues. All fundraising efforts go to support the Runkle PTO Annual Fund that provides an average of $150 to each student in support, activities, events, trips, and materials every year. While many other schools work on continuous annual fundraising programs through bake sales, auctions etc., the Runkle PTO asks parents to make one single contribution that is voluntary and tax-deductible. Parents can give what they are able – any amount helps! To donate, volunteer, or learn more visit Runkle.org, subscribe to Runkle News, or join us at the next PTO Meeting.