

BEECHWOOD SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR GRADES PreK-2



**A GUIDE TO POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PROGRAMS
INCLUDING THE BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES
FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR**

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Primary school educators are committed to pursuing and maintaining an academically excellent, developmentally responsive, and socially equitable learning environment for every student. We realize that the parents/guardians are our partners in the educational process and the student handbook is meant to provide you and your child with information pertaining to academics, attendance, and conduct. We urge you to read and review this school document with your child so that your child's primary school experience is wonderful.

I. ACADEMICS

A. Homework Guidelines and Requests

Homework is an extension and reinforcement of what occurs in the classroom. It enables students to reflect upon and react to learning experiences in a meaningful way. We expect every student to accept the responsibility for completing homework neatly, accurately, and on time. While parents/guardians are supportive and encouraging, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to complete assignments that represent the student's best quality and effort. On average, primary school students are to expect to receive **10-30 minutes of homework per evening**. For more specific homework policy information, parents/guardians can contact individual teachers.

In the event a student was or is going to be absent from school for two days or more due to illness, the student's parent/guardian may notify the main office at (908) 301-9104, ext. 200 and **request work on the second day of absence**. For those students who were or are going to be absent from school for two days or more due to illness, we recommend that parents/guardians contact the main office before 11:30 a.m. if possible so that anticipated missed assignments can be completed by students while they are absent from school. Once the main office has been notified, teachers will provide work for the student. Parents/guardians are to allow 24 hours after notification for the work to be provided by the teacher(s). When students are absent for one day, students or parents/guardians can contact a classmate to obtain assignments rather than the main office.

If a student has to quarantine for 10 or more days, s/he will be included in the remote learning for that homeroom/grade level.

B. Grading/Report Cards

Kindergarten, first, and second grade students have reading, writing, phonics, mathematics, science and social studies as core academic subjects. They also have art, music, physical education, and H.A.M.S.T.E.R (Humanities, Art, Math, Science, Technology, Engineering, Reading) as special area classes.

The grades for academic content areas and special area classes are 4=Exceeds Standards, 3=Achieves Standards, 2=Approaching Standards, and 1=Needs Support. The legend for interpreting student progress on specials report cards is C=Consistently, U=Usually, S=Sometimes, and I=Infrequently.

Beechwood students in grades kindergarten, first, and second will receive report cards in December, March, and June. Student progress will be shared during parent-teacher conferences in December.

Report cards need to be signed by parents/guardians and returned to classroom teachers. Questions related to report cards should be directed to your child's teacher(s).

II. ATTENDANCE

A. General Provisions

New Jersey state law requires that students attend school regularly, and it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to see their children attend school on the days/hours that the public schools are in session in the district (N.J.S.A. 18A: 38-25). In order to facilitate students' chances for success, Beechwood staff members will work cooperatively with parents/guardians to assure that students attend school daily.

If a student is absent, a parent/guardian is to call the school nurse at (908) 301-9104, ext. 202 to inform the school of the absence prior to 8:30 a.m. on the day of the absence. This number can be accessed 24 hours a day. If a student is absent and the school nurse has not been notified, the school nurse will attempt to call the parent/guardian emergency contacts listed on PowerSchool. If no one can be reached to verify the student's whereabouts, a police officer and the building administrator will be dispatched to the student's home.

Those students not in attendance for a **minimum of four hours** on any given school day may not participate in or attend any extracurricular activities that are held that day. In accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A: 32-8.3, "for purposes of school attendance, a day in session shall be a day on which the school is open and students are under the guidance and direction of a teacher or teachers engaged in the teaching process...A school day shall consist of not less than four hours of actual instruction."

It is recognized that certain legitimate occurrences may occasionally cause a student to be absent from school. Those occurrences which constitute legitimate absences from school and classes include the following: family illness or death; educational opportunities; excused religious observances (pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16); suspension from school or school sponsored activity; and other reasons which receive prior written approval of the Building Administrator.

Students returning to school from an absence are required to submit a note to their teacher within two days of their return. Students must submit a note indicating the reason for the absence upon their return to school in order for excused absences to be recorded as such. Students who do not submit notes for excused absences will have those absences recorded as unexcused. To verify an excused absence, a doctor's note or parent's/guardian's note for an absence due to illness, a parent's/guardian's note for a death in the family, and/or a parent's/guardian's note for a religious holiday, which is recognized by the state of New Jersey, must be provided.

For attendance, students and parents/guardians are to be aware of the following additional expectations and regulations:

Students under the age of 16 who **exceed 20 days of unexcused absences during the course of one school year may have a complaint filed** against their parents/guardians in municipal court; or student may be considered for retention due to lack of academic progress.

Students who have an extended or serious illness shall not be charged with absences provided they are under a doctor's care or are receiving home instruction;

Students who are absent from school due to observance of a religious holiday shall not be deprived of any award or eligibility thereof or opportunity to compete for any award, or of the right to take an alternate test/examination, as long as an absence note is submitted as described herein;

Student absences from school because of students being assigned in-school and/or out-of-school suspension are excused absences; and

Students vacationing during school days will accrue unexcused absences. The scheduling of vacations during the school year is not encouraged in that students miss valuable instructional time. **Teachers will not be able to provide a list of specific assignments in advance** but will make general assignments available to students within a reasonable amount of time. This being the case, teachers will establish guidelines for due dates that the building administrator will support.

Although certain medical appointments may be considered excused absences, parents/guardians are urged to schedule doctor and dental appointments after school hours.

B. Late Arrivals/Early Dismissals

Students are expected to be in their classrooms by 8:40 a.m. Students who arrive late to school are to be accompanied to the main entrance with their parent/guardian for the parent/guardian to sign the tardy student into school. Please call the school nurse at (908) 301-9104, ext. 202 if you anticipate your child being more than a few minutes late to school.

Students who wish to be dismissed early from school **must have a request to do so from a parent/guardian.** That request is to be **emailed** to the school secretary, Lynne Ciasulli at lciasulli@mountainsideschools.org the morning of the request. **The student is not to submit notes for early dismissals to teachers.** The request must state the reason and time for the early dismissal. The parent/guardian who is picking up the student must personally sign out and pick up the child in the main entrance of the school, at which time, he/she may be asked to display personal identification and/or to identify the Family Security Code listed on PowerSchool. This is for security purposes. Siblings who are under the age of 18 will not be permitted to sign students out under any circumstances.

If a parent/guardian wishes to change student pick-up procedure, **please contact the main office at (908) 301-9104 ext. 200** and the message will be relayed to the classroom teacher. Please do not assume your child's teacher will retrieve your message before dismissal. **Substitute teachers do not listen to the teacher's voicemail or read their emails, which is another reason we are asking you to leave a message with the main office.**

III. SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

A. Communication with Staff Members

Parents/guardians are partners in the educational process. It is essential for parents/guardians and staff members to communicate with one another in terms of student progress and behavior. Frequent contact through telephone calls, e-mail, conferences, and publications is vital in that the success of primary school students is contingent upon continual communication.

Staff members can be contacted by telephone at (908) 301-9104 followed by the respective extension. A list of staff members, telephone extensions, and e-mail addresses is linked to the school website. In the event parents/guardians are contacting a teacher for the first time by telephone, parents/guardians are reminded that most teachers are required to arrive at 8:10 a.m. and are required to remain in the building until 3:30 p.m.

To contact staff members through email, simply type the first letter of the first name of the staff member you wish to contact followed by the last name of the staff member you wish to contact. The final step is to attach: @mountainsideschools.org. For example, if you wished to contact Ms. Mary Smith (fictitious teacher for example only), you would use this address: msmith@mountainsideschools.org.

As a general reminder to all parents/guardians, all visitors must sign-in and sign-out in the main office and may be asked to display personal identification and/or to identify the Family Security Code listed on the PowerSchool. Additional school information is available to parents/guardians through the school website, <http://www.mountainsideschools.org>.

B. Support Services

Counseling - Beechwood School has a school guidance counselor, Ms. Ramona Ramesar, who provides services for the student population. Parents/guardians are to make every effort to contact the school counselor in the event they notice a significant change in their child's behavior and/or attitude. The counselor can be quite helpful regarding conflict resolution if a parent/guardian notices that students are having difficulty relating to one another. Our school guidance counselor is instrumental in dealing with the many personalities and challenges associated with primary school as the counselor addresses various developmentally responsive themes.

Specifically, the primary school counseling program focuses on the following areas: transition/orientation, character education, crisis intervention, problem solving, individual counseling, small group counseling, classroom developmental counseling, parent/family involvement, and consultation/collaboration with staff members, parents/guardians, mental health professionals, and community members. Ms. Ramesar can be reached at ramesar@mountainsideschools.org. Her extension is 378.

I&RS - Beechwood also has an Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) Committee, which is comprised of teachers, a Child Study Team representative, a school nurse, and a school administrator. When a concern arises pertaining to the academic and/or social-emotional growth of a student, parents/guardians or staff members may share the concern with the building administrator. After the concern is shared, a recommendation may be made to schedule an I&RS Committee meeting. The purpose of an I&RS Committee meeting is often for teachers to communicate with the student's parents/guardians in order to identify the difficulties the student is experiencing. Strategies for assisting the student in school are established. When necessary, the Child Study Team (CST) conducts a complete evaluation of the student.

Child Study Team - Beechwood provides special education services to classified students via the Child Study Team (CST). The CST includes the Learning Disabilities Teacher-Consultant (LDT-C), the school psychologist, the school social worker, and the school speech therapist. The LDT-C works directly with classroom teachers, observing and offering academic and classroom management strategies to assist students who are experiencing difficulties. The school psychologist is available to students for counseling purposes and to parents/guardians for additional support strategies relative to student behavior. In addition, the school social worker can guide the development of social skills. The CST may conduct an evaluation to determine whether or not a student is eligible for special education and related services. Each CST member may serve as case manager for students who are referred for evaluation or who are identified as needing special education services. The case manager coordinates the development, monitoring, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). This staff member facilitates communication between home and school and facilitates the annual review and re-evaluation process.

IV. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In the section that follows, we have provided an alphabetical listing of several guidelines parents/guardians and students can familiarize themselves with to better understand general school policies and procedures.

A. Birthday Invitations

Birthday invitations cannot be distributed at school.

B. Birthday Class Celebrations

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, parents are invited to Zoom into classrooms to read a story to the class. Parents can also pre-record a video and send it to the teacher to play during the school day. Arrangements need to be coordinated with the homeroom teacher.

Food, treats, balloons and/or goodie bags are not allowed in school to celebrate your child's birthday.

C. Building Appearance

Our custodial staff members work very hard to keep Beechwood School clean. Every student is to respect and care for the building with a great degree of enthusiasm in order to contribute toward maintaining a pleasant learning environment. Students are to take pride in the appearance of our school by refraining from defacing and vandalizing school property and by removing debris when appropriate.

D. Busing/Bus Evacuation Drills

Students must have a bus pass to ride the bus and are not allowed to ride a different bus than the one assigned to them. Requests for your child to ride another student's bus will not be honored. However, if you need your child to get off his/her bus at a stop other than their own, please contact the school office at 908-301-9104, ext. 200.

New Jersey state law requires schools to conduct bus evacuation drills. During a bus evacuation drill, students are to leave all of their personal belongings on the bus (should they have them with them) and exit the rear of the bus quickly, silently, and in a single file line. Upon exiting, students are to bend down and use their hands and arms to brace themselves as

they get out of the actual bus. Our students will be assisted by an adult (teacher, police officer, bus driver, and/or building administrator) to ensure their safety. Once students have exited the bus, they are to stand quietly and wait until the signal is given for them to return to the bus and gather their personal belongings. Students can then proceed to their classes in an orderly fashion.

E. Delayed Openings/Early Dismissals/Emergency School Closings

Should an **early dismissal** be called during the school day, parents/guardians will receive a call from the automated telephone system when there is an early dismissal. The Mountainside School District website is another resource for this information.

Prior to an **emergency school closing**, parents/guardians will receive a call from the automated telephone system. The Mountainside School District website is another resource for this information. Parents/guardians are advised to plan ahead to make arrangements for child care should no one be home during the school day.

F. Drop Off/Pickup

Due to the need to adhere to social distancing guidelines, the arrival and dismissal procedures have been modified accordingly. There is no parent parking in the school lot for arrival or dismissal. Arrival begins promptly at 8:15 a.m. Parents of students in grades K-2 are to drive through the car-line lane. Parents walking their children must remain on the sidewalk, wear masks, and obey social distancing guidelines. Students are to enter through the grade-level designated entrance. Students must be wearing masks on school grounds. Dismissal begins at 12:45. **Walkers must report to Mrs. Jenks so their children are checked out through PickUp Patrol.**

G. Electronic Devices/Toys

Electronic handheld games are not permitted in school. Staff members will confiscate these items if students are seen handling or using them in school. Once a staff member has confiscated an electronic device, it will be turned over to the building administrator. The first time this occurs, the item will be returned to the student at the end of the school day. The second incident will result in the item being returned to the student's parent/guardian. The school is not responsible for theft, loss, or damage of an electronic device.

Toys are considered to be disruptive to the learning process. We strongly discourage students from bringing any toys to school. Once a staff member has confiscated a toy or other disruptive article, it will be turned over to the building administrator. The first time this occurs, the article will be returned to the student at the end of the school day. The second incident will result in the article being returned to the student's parent/guardian.

H. Field Trips

Due to COVID-19, there are no field trips being planned during the 2020-2021 school year.

I. Food – Snack

Please pack a healthy snack for your child to eat at snack time. We suggest it be placed in a paper bag clearly marked with your child's name. **Due to the number of students with peanut related allergies, we are a nut-free school.** We ask you to pack a snack free of nuts, peanuts, and nut or peanut by-products and is manufactured in a nut free facility.

J. Fire Drills

New Jersey state law requires schools to conduct fire drills. Every classroom and shared space such as the gymnasium has posted fire drill procedures as well as a map of fire drill escape routes. During a fire drill, students are to walk quickly, silently, and in a single file line from the classroom. Students who are not with their regular class when the fire alarm sounds are to report to the nearest staff member and give his/her name to that individual for attendance/security purposes. While outside, students are to stand quietly and wait for the signal to return to the building. After the signal has sounded, students can return to their classrooms in an orderly fashion. Students are to be aware of alternate routes to evacuate the building should designated escape routes be blocked.

K. Lockdown/Evacuation Drills

Drill protocols may be adjusted to reflect COVID-19 requirements as provided by the NJ Department of Education.

NJ state law requires schools to conduct lockdown and evacuation drills. In the event of an emergency, which requires students and staff members

to remain in their classrooms or exit the building, it is essential that all students fully cooperate by following their teacher's directions. We will practice these drills on a monthly basis.

L. Media Center

In our efforts to limit common touch points and keep children with the same cohort throughout the day, the students will not be visiting the media center during the school day. You can watch this [video](#) for information on how books will be borrowed this school year.

M. Medication Procedures/Notes for the Nurse

The school nurse must supervise the administration of any medication, prescription or nonprescription, to any student during the school day. All medications must be contained in original-labeled bottles, must be accompanied by a doctor's note, and must include written parent/guardian permission. As for excuses from physical education classes, any student who receives an injury requiring doctor's care must submit a doctor's note to the nurse stating how long he/she will not be participating in physical education activities. Parent/guardian requests excusing students from physical education classes for more than three days of time will not be honored. Students with medical conditions that prohibit participation in physical education activities for the school year must submit new doctor's notes every September to the school nurse excusing them from physical education classes.

N. Personal Possessions (Lost and Found)

Personal possessions are brought to school at the student's own risk. Staff members are not responsible for any damages, thefts, or losses relative to personal possessions. This includes jewelry, money, and other valuables. Students may check the lost and found for missing items. The lost and found has one location inside the main doors of Beechwood near the main office. Also, valuables and items other than clothing are to be brought to the main office. To increase the chance of returning lost articles to the rightful owners, please permanently mark all items brought to school with the student's name.

O. Pets/Animals

No pets or animals are permitted in school given this may negatively impact students with allergies. If a student wishes to utilize a pet/animal as

part of a presentation directly related to the curriculum, the student must obtain permission from the building administrator in advance.

P. Recording Devices

Students are not permitted to be in possession of or use tape recorders, video cameras, standard handheld cameras, disposable cameras, digital cameras, cellular telephones with recording abilities, and other recording devices at Beechwood. These items will be confiscated by staff members if students are handling or using them. Once a staff member has confiscated a recording device, it will be turned over to the building administrator. The first time this occurs, the item will be returned to the student at the end of the school day. The second incident will result in the item being returned to the student's parent/guardian. Allowances may be made by the building administrator for the use of recording devices in school for instructional purposes or at school functions. If a student is uncertain as to whether or not it is appropriate to bring one of these items in, the student is to ask his/her teacher(s) or the building administrator.

Q. Telephone Usage

Parents will be notified by the classroom teacher or the school secretary if there are any questions or concerns raised by the student during the school day. Students will not be able to come down to the office and use the telephone due to the need to eliminate common touch points.

V. CODE OF CONDUCT

Beechwood School is a place for learning, and every student should be able to learn in a school that is safe and orderly. We believe that children must understand that their behavior can in no way deprive other children of their right to learn. As a staff then, we are committed to creating and maintaining an atmosphere that will make our school a happy and safe place for all children and a place that is conducive to learning. The school district's common goal related to discipline reflects a desire that all children learn that good citizens are honest, responsible, respect themselves, respect others and respect property. Students, parents and staff must share responsibility for creating an optimal school setting. To achieve this, students will be held responsible for the choices they make regarding behavior. Teachers administrators, staff and parents must work together as a team with a clear understanding of expectations and procedures. Please review the following general expectations for behavior and possible consequences with your child.

Restorative Justice is guided by a philosophy that fosters social and emotional well-being, acceptance, empowerment, and mutual respect for those who are impacted by and involved in conflict. Mountainside strives to build cultures and communities of responsibility, respect, and reparation of relationships where harm has occurred. Restorative Justice seeks to cultivate an equitable environment where all individuals feel safe, included, heard and will benefit from shared learning experiences. Mountainside will provide integrated methods to address conflict through reflection, reconciliation and accountability where harm has occurred.

A. Expectations for Behavior:

Students at Beechwood School are respectful and responsible when they are:

- Being kind and respectful to all students by treating others by the way they want to be treated, by keeping their hands and feet to themselves, using friendly language, playing fairly and including anyone who wants to join a game or other activity.
- Practicing self controls by being patient, to taking turns, and using words to solve problems
- Caring for school property and by helping to keep our school clean and safe
- Following the directions given by teachers, instructional aides and parent volunteers in all situations - classroom, bathroom, hallways, playground and lunchroom.

At Beechwood, it is our intent to create a stable social and emotional learning environment for our students. When a child is having difficulty following school expectations set forth in the Code of Conduct, logical consequences are necessary. Logical consequences are not punishments, but a way to help students remediate the inappropriate behavior and learn the appropriate behavior expected of all members of the Beechwood learning community.

Our goal is to help children learn from their mistakes and problems. Logical consequences are related to misbehavior. "If you break it, you fix it," refers to damaged property as well as hurt feelings. Most importantly, consequences will be determined according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student and the student's history of problem behaviors. Each child's circumstances are reviewed carefully to determine what is best and fair for each child.

All staff members have the responsibility to address behavioral issues. The staff member(s) will speak to the child and, if necessary, contact will be made with the parent. If necessary, the staff member(s) will involve the

Principal. Any serious violation impacting the safety of others will immediately go to the Principal.

B. Possible Consequences & Remediation Measures

Before the following steps occur, the staff member will address the inappropriate behavior by contacting the parent/guardian via telephone as to how he/she is going to proceed.

- Staff member discusses the problem with the student
- Student completes a verbal or written apology
- Principal discusses the problem with the student
- Staff member or principal contacts the parent (phone, email, letter)
- Student completes a problem solving sheet, which is signed by the parent
- An appropriate time-out during recess is issued
- Loss of privilege is issued
- Restitution or restoration for damaged property is expected
- Students and/or parent meet with the school counselor and/or Principal
- Parent-teacher conference is scheduled to develop a plan for remediation of behavior
- Student is temporarily removed from the classroom
- An in-school or out of school suspension is issued

C. Acceptable Use Policy

Appropriate computer use is an expectation for kindergarten, first, and second grade students. Recognizing that the Internet is neither a regulated nor policed entity, staff members require students to use this resource as an aid in the learning process according to the guidelines established in the Acceptable Use Policy, which is available on our website.

D. Dress Code

The purpose of the dress code is to develop an appropriate tone that contributes to a safe and positive learning environment with a minimal amount of distractions.

Students wearing strapless sandals and/or flip flops may cause injury when worn on the playground during recess. Therefore, we encourage students to wear shoes that will enable them to play outside safely. Staff members will determine whether or not the dress of students meets these expectations. Students are required to wear sneakers during gym class. If

the student does not have sneakers then he or she can call home or else sit out during gym class.

Head accessories worn for religious purposes or medical concerns will be permitted.

E. Lunch

Free lunch will be provided for all students in grades PK-2 through the 2020-2021 school year. Remote students will order lunches through Maschio's on a weekly basis. In person students will order lunch through the classroom teacher on a daily basis. Lunches will be sent home with students

F. Bus Discipline

The primary function of the bus driver is to transport students safely to and from school. If the driver is preoccupied with disciplining students, it increases the chance that an accident may occur. For bus safety purposes, a set of rules and consequences is listed below.

Bus Rules:

1. Students must wear face covering at all times while waiting for and while on the bus.
2. Students are to remain in their assigned seats for the entire ride.
3. Students are not permitted to eat or drink on the bus. This includes gum chewing, candy, water bottles, etc. Littering is not to occur either.
4. Students are not permitted to use inappropriate language on the bus.
5. Students are not permitted to scream or make excessive noise on the bus.
6. Students are not to be disrespectful or confrontational with the driver. Bus drivers deserve the same level of respect as do teachers and other staff members.
7. Students must keep their hands and bodies inside the bus at all times.
8. Students are not permitted to throw objects or spit out of the window.
9. Students are not permitted to throw or shoot objects on the bus.
10. Vandalism is not permitted on the bus. This includes writing on bus seats (floors, ceilings, sides, and windows) and/or ripping/cutting bus seats.
11. Fighting and horseplay are not permitted on the bus.

Students must ride the bus the transportation department has assigned for them. To be clear, a student may not ride on another student's bus to or from school at any time. Written and verbal requests to do so will be denied. Only those students who have been given permission to ride the bus may do so. Only routine, scheduled pickups and stops will be made. If a student needs to be dropped off at a stop other than his/her own, a note must be sent to the classroom teacher who will then fill out a bus pass for the bus driver.

Consequences for Bus Infractions:

If a student does not follow the bus rules, he/she will be referred to the building administrator. Students and parents/guardians are to note that appropriate administrative action will be taken which may include: the issuance of a bus contract, lunch/recess detention, suspension or removal of bus privileges, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, restitution assignment, and/or police contact. At all times, the building administrator reserves the right to intervene and take action if student behavior is deemed inappropriate or in violation of district-wide policies.

In addition, students and parents/guardians are to be aware of the fact that the school day begins as soon as students reach the bus stop and does not conclude until students exit the bus on the ride home. This extends to after-school activities and field trips as well. If students choose to misbehave at the bus stop on the way to or from school, they will be held accountable for their actions. Parents/guardians will be contacted in regard to bus offenses as needed. With respect to the suspension of bus privileges, New Jersey state law permits staff members to deny bus transportation privileges if a student's conduct warrants such action. If transportation privileges are denied, it becomes the responsibility of the student's parents/guardians to see that he/she arrives at school and is transported home at dismissal.

VI. A FINAL NOTE

Thank you for taking the time to read and review the student handbook with your child. Please understand that each child's safety is our primary concern. We look forward to working with you. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns.