

**BEECHWOOD SCHOOL  
STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR GRADES PreK-2**



**A GUIDE TO POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PROGRAMS  
INCLUDING THE BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES  
FOR THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR**

**Mrs. Jessica Vierschilling  
Beechwood School Principal**

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 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.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page(s)</b>
I. MOUNTAINSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT VISION	3
II. MOUNTAINSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION	3
III. MOUNTAINSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT GOALS	3 - 4
IV. ACADEMICS	4 -5
V. ATTENDANCE	5 - 7
VI. SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	8-10
VII. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	10 -15
VIII. CODE OF CONDUCT	15 -19
IX. FINAL NOTE	20
X. Appendix	20

Board of Education [Policy 5512](#) – Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

[Mountainside School District Calendar](#)

[Beechwood School Regular, Early Dismissal, and Delayed Opening Schedules](#)

**I. MOUNTAINSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT VISION**

The vision is to ensure that Mountainside remains a premier suburban school district in which all students acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to live rich and full lives as productive and enlightened members of society, empowering them to shape, build, and achieve their dreams.

**II. MOUNTAINSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION**

The Mountainside School District will provide an exceptional, well-rounded education with equitable opportunities, which align with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards, for all students that will empower them with the knowledge, literacy and skills to compete and thrive in a global environment, while becoming responsible on personal, community, and world levels. The Board of Education, administration and staff, working together with students, parents and the community, are accountable for achieving this vision.

**III. MOUNTAINSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT GOALS**

1. To create high quality 21st Century schools that will prepare our PreK-8 students to face the rigorous academic challenges of secondary and post-secondary education and/or challenging careers.
2. To maximize the efficient use of district resources and funding opportunities.
3. To provide the best technological learning tools, and a reliable and dynamic infrastructure and environment for our students and faculty.
4. To maintain/improve communication and community engagement within the district and between the school district and all stakeholders.
5. To promote and maintain a safe and secure school environment.

**WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE...**

- That children are society’s most valuable asset and every decision should be in their best interest.
- That schools should give all students opportunities to achieve and succeed to the best of their abilities.
- That schools should provide a safe, positive and welcoming environment that emphasizes integrity, pride, acceptance and mutual respect and will allow students to become responsible and caring adults.
- That students must understand the value of education and the opportunities it provides.
- That schools must address the needs of the whole child in areas such as: social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and civic preparation.
- That schools should create a comprehensive curriculum incorporating 21st century creative and critical thinking, technology, communication, entrepreneurial, and problem-solving skills imperative to succeeding in a global society.

- That well-rounded academic and extracurricular experiences (athletics, fine arts, and clubs) should be available and encouraged for all students.
- That parents are essential to the success of the educational process.
- That staff members should be knowledgeable in their subject areas, with a vigorous emphasis on professional development and creative, innovative instructional methods to ensure all students achieve at their highest levels.
- That facing budgetary and economic issues, the district will find the best funding resources available to support its mission and to provide efficient, effective and safe school facilities and infrastructure.
- That an excellent school system is crucial to the economic development and vitality of the community.
- That community involvement is critical in the educational process.
- That we must commit to continually improving communication and maintaining a strong relationship between the schools, residents and Mountainside community at large.

#### IV. 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 can 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 due to illness or other excused absence, a parent/guardian may contact their child's teacher to request missed work/homework. The homework and related materials may be picked up in the main office by a parent/guardian, sibling, classmate, or other designated person a day following the date of the request, or sooner if indicated by the teacher. As appropriate, students will also be able to access any Google Classroom assignments that are posted.

Student vacations during the time school is in session should be avoided and will not result in the provision of work to be completed while he/she is gone.

##### 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 behaviors that support learning is C=Consistently, U=Usually, S=Sometimes, and I=Infrequently.

All Beechwood students will receive report cards via the Genesis Parent Portal in December, March, and June. Student progress will also be shared during scheduled parent-teacher conferences in late fall. Additional student progress meetings may be requested by parents or teachers, and scheduled at an agreed upon time.

Questions related to report cards should be directed to your child's teacher(s).

## V. ATTENDANCE

### A. General Provisions

New Jersey state law requires that students attend school regularly, and it's 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' opportunity for success, staff will work cooperatively with parents/guardians to assure students attend school daily. In order to assist with ensuring that students attend school on a regular basis, the following guidelines and protocols are have been put in place:

- If a student is absent, notify school using the [Genesis Parent Portal](#):
  - In the portal, note the absence under "Student Data >Attendance > Notify Office" tabs.
  - **In addition to the portal, please also email your teacher and enter plan changes impacting dismissal in PUP.**
- If a student is absent and the school has not been notified, the school will call the parent/guardian or emergency contacts provided to us in Genesis. If no one can be reached to verify the student's whereabouts, a police officer may be dispatched to the student's home to conduct a wellness check.
- Students must be in attendance for a **minimum of four hours** on a given school day in order to participate in or attend any extracurricular activities that are held that day.

Please note: The state of New Jersey, only recognizes the following reasons as excused absences from school:

- [Religious observances](#) (pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16)
- Participation in Veteran's Day activities and/or Take Our Children to Work Day
- Closure of a busing school district that prevents a student from having transportation to the receiving school

The Mountainside Board of Education has adopted policies that establish locally approved or excused absences consistent with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6 which are outlined below, however be aware that an absence designated as excused by the Board pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6 is **considered an "unexcused" absence in the submission to the State for the purpose of chronic absenteeism reporting**, as set forth at N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.6.

**The Mountainside Board of Education recognizes the following as "excused" absences that will not count towards truancy, as outlined in [District Regulation 5200](#):**

- All New Jersey excused absences noted above
- A student's illness supported by parent notification and/or a doctor's note
  - A student who has been absent for having or suspected of having a communicable disease may be required to present a doctor's note to the nurse prior to return.
- Family illness or death supported by the student's parent
  - *The number of days recognized as excused must be discussed with the principal or nurse.*
- Student suspension from school
- Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day
- Student's required attendance in court

**All other absences not described above, including vacations, will be considered "unexcused" absences that count towards truancy within the Mountainside School District.** The District will implement the following response for accumulated unexcused absences as outlined in [District Regulation 5200](#):

- For up to four cumulative unexcused absences, the Principal or designee shall send a letter home and follow all other protocols outlined in policy and regulation
- For between five and nine cumulative unexcused absences, the Principal or designee shall notify the student's parents in writing and work in conjunction to develop an action plan based on the student's pattern of absences as outlined in Regulation 5200
- For ten or more cumulative unexcused absences, a student between the ages of six and sixteen is considered truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the Principal or designee shall:
  - Meet with parents to discuss student truancy and adjust action plan as needed
  - Make a determination regarding the need for a court referral for the truancy, per N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iv. and details outlined in section G.4 of Regulation 5200
  - Consider retention due to lack of academic progress.

Please be aware of the following additional expectations and regulations:

- If parent notification IS NOT received for student illness, the absence will count towards truancy.
- Students who have an extended or serious illness shall not be charged with absences provided they are under a doctor's care and 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 in Genesis.
- Teachers will cooperate in the preparation of home assignments for students who anticipate an **excused** absence of five or more school days duration.
- Students absent for any reason are expected to make up the work missed. The parent or student is responsible for requesting missed assignments and any assistance required. Teachers will provide make-up assignments as necessary.
  - In general, students will be allowed a reasonable amount of time as determined by the teacher to make up the work missed.
  - A student who missed a test or an exam shall be offered an opportunity to take the test, exam, or an appropriate alternate test.
- Scheduling vacations during the school year is strongly discouraged in that students miss valuable instructional time. **Teachers will not be able to provide a list of specific assignments in advance** but will make assignments available and set due dates for students within a reasonable amount of time upon return.

### **B. Late Arrivals**

Students are expected to be **in their classroom by 8:30 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. If you anticipate your child being more than a few minutes late to school, notify school using the Genesis Parent Portal according to the instructions above.

Establishing positive habits for a timely arrival to school is important for each student as well as the smooth operation of the building.

- Upon the 4th late arrival, a letter from the school principal will be mailed home.
- Upon the 8th late arrival, a conference with the parent and the school principal will be arranged.
- Upon every subsequent 4th late arrival, a conference with the parent and the school principal will be arranged.

### **C. Early Dismissals**

If a student will be picked up early notify school using the [Genesis Parent Portal](#):

1. In the portal, record details for the main office under the "Student Data ->Attendance -> Notify Office" tabs.
2. **In addition, please also email your teacher and enter plan changes impacting dismissal in PUP.**
3. Park in the parking lot and ring the bell at the main entrance to come in and sign your child in/out.

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 in Genesis. 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, this can be updated in the Pick Up Patrol app until 2:00 pm. If you need to make a dismissal plan change later than that, **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 a timely message before dismissal. Additionally, **substitute teachers do not have access to the teacher's voicemail or emails, which is another reason we ask you to leave a message with the main office.**

## VI. 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.

Most staff members can be contacted through email that aligns with their first initial, last name, followed by @mountainsideschools.org. For example, if you wished to contact Mary Smith (fictitious teacher for example only), you would use this address: [msmith@mountainsideschools.org](mailto:msmith@mountainsideschools.org). \*Please note that there are a limited number of staff members whose email differs from this norm. Don't hesitate to contact building secretary, Maryann Brown at [mbrown@mountainsideschools.org](mailto:mbrown@mountainsideschools.org) if you need assistance.

Parents/guardians are reminded that teachers may have limited availability to email, or to make or return phone calls during the course of the school day. Staff will always make every effort to respond to all outreach within 24 hours.

All parents/guardians coming to school must sign-in and sign-out in the main office on the visitor log unless instructed otherwise by school administration.

### B. Support Services

**Counseling - Mrs. Ramona Kuznedelov - [rkuznedelov@mountainsideschools.org](mailto:rkuznedelov@mountainsideschools.org)**  
908-301-9104 x378



Beechwood School has a school guidance counselor 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 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, and is our expert in helping our young students navigate challenges and support their needs in a developmentally appropriate manner. Our counselor visits classrooms to support positive social skills development for all students, as well. In its entirety, the primary school counseling program encompasses: 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.

**RTI (formerly I&RS)** - Beechwood also has a Response To Intervention team (RTI) team 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 and/or staff members may share the concern with the building administrator. After the concern is shared, a recommendation may be made to schedule an RTI team meeting. The purpose of an RTI team meeting is often for teachers to communicate with the student's parents/guardians in order to identify the difficulties the student is experiencing and create an action plan to assist. When additional input is necessary beyond the provisions of a general education program, the Child Study Team (CST) may conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the student to determine eligibility for special education support.

**Child Study Team** - With parent/guardian consent, Beechwood provides special education services to classified students via Child Study Team (CST) recommendations. 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.

**Nurse - Mrs. Lisa Bruno**, [libruno@mountainsideschools.org](mailto:libruno@mountainsideschools.org) 908-301-9104 x202,  
908-481-1540 (fax)

The Beechwood school nurse is a health professional whose responsibilities include providing basic health care for students, acting as a liaison to parents/guardians specific to student illness and absence from school, handling emergency situations, and serving as a resource person for the RTI and Child Study Teams.

**AIM** (Academic Intervention for Mastery) - Beechwood provides basic skills instruction as one of its student support services. AIM includes supplemental instruction in the content areas of language arts literacy or mathematics and is available to general education students during school hours. Students below academic grade level expectations may be eligible for this program based on teacher recommendations, assessment data, and the RTI team. The teachers who provide this instruction collaborate with the student's homeroom teacher and provide AIM support through a push in or pull out model. Student progress is monitored to determine recommendations to continue or exit this program, or perhaps seek alternate means of support.

**MLs** (Multilingual Learners; formerly ESL) - Beechwood students whose primary spoken language is one other than English are screened to determine their level of English proficiency. During this process, state criteria are utilized to ascertain eligibility for assistance in language acquisition. Eligible ML students will receive support to promote English language learning.

**G&T Programming** (Gifted & Talented) - The Mountainside School District's Gifted and Talented program provides enrichment opportunities to students demonstrating high abilities in one or more areas through a continuum of services. In Grades K-2, identified students will be provided with collaborative and individual enrichment opportunities through differentiated instruction. This differentiation will be facilitated daily by the classroom teacher. Reading/Math specialists will additionally support the teacher in these efforts. H.A.M.S.T.E.R. (humanities, arts, math, science, technology, engineering, and reading) class is also designed to immerse students in educational experiences that develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills across multiple subject areas. Visit the [G&T webpage](#) for additional program information.

## **VII. 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 may be distributed as a courtesy to families at school if an invitation is provided for every student in the classroom. There can be no exceptions.

### **B. Birthday Class Celebrations**

We know this is so important for our students! Parents are invited to be their child's special guest according to details shared by your child's teacher. This often takes place as parents are invited to be a guest reader either in person or via zoom. Parents can also consider gifting a book through the PTO's "Birthday Book Club" program. Details will be shared by the school and your child's teacher, and should 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 Mrs. Donna Bolton at the board office at 908-301-9104, x105.

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**

Parents/guardians are notified of a **delayed opening** with as much advance notice as possible. Notification includes a text, email, and/or call from the School Messenger system. Should an **early dismissal** be called during the school day, parents/ guardians will receive a text, email, and/or call from the School Messenger system. Information will also be posted on the Mountainside School District website.

Prior to an **emergency school closing**, parents/guardians will receive a call from the School Messenger 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**

Parents of students in grades K-2 are to drive through the car-line lane. Parents walking their children must remain on the sidewalk, and adhere to the “student only” zone surrounding the building entrance/exit doors. Parking in the main school lot is extremely limited and should be utilized by Pre-School families only. Those with an extenuating circumstance that prevents the student from independently exiting/entering their vehicle through staff assistance at the car line can pull around to the small, side BOE parking lot along the curb to exit their vehicle and assist their child as necessary. Arrival begins promptly at 8:15 a.m. Students are to enter through their grade-level designated entrance. Cars may arrive for dismissal at 2:45. Student dismissal will begin at 2:55pm. **Walkers must report to Mrs. Vierschilling/Mrs. Castro to be checked in through PickUp Patrol (PUP).**

#### **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.

Hand held or wearable electronic devices capable of photographic, video, or telephone communication are discouraged. **If a family chooses to send such devices to school, they must remain off and in the student’s backpack.**

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 unless such a plan has been established with the teacher. 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**

Field trips are an important enhancement to our instructional curriculum. Typically, one field trip experience is planned for all K-2 students per year. All students will be required to follow rules/protocols set forth by the location. Your child's teacher will update you regarding field trips for your child.

## **I. Food – Snacks & Lunch**

Children are provided with a 40 minute lunch/recess period, as well as an additional snack time in their classroom, and 20 minute recess period each day. Please pack a healthy snack for your child to eat during their daily snack time. Your child's snack should be packed separately from their lunch and placed in a paper bag or small reusable lunch box clearly marked with your child's name.

Our food services provider is Maschio's. Students are able to purchase hot/cold lunch items from the available lunch menu, or pack their own lunch each day. Additionally, students may purchase snack items to supplement their lunch meal in the cafeteria. For more information including menus, pricing details, and how to load funds to your child's cafeteria account, please consult the cafeteria/food services tab on the [district website](#).

**To promote inclusivity, we are a nut-free school.** Thank you in advance for avoiding snack and lunch food items that contain or were processed in a facility that produces items with nuts/peanuts.

## **J. Fire Drills**

New Jersey state law requires schools to regularly 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 pay attention to the supervising adult, stand quietly and wait for the signal to return to the building. After the signal, students can return to their classrooms in an orderly fashion. Students are to be aware of alternate routes to evacuate the building should designated evacuation routes be blocked.

## **K. Lockdown/Evacuation Drills**

NJ state law requires schools to regularly conduct emergency 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. Principals will notify families by the end of the school day via email following each emergency drill.

#### **L. Media Center**

Students will visit the media center during their scheduled library time each week. The school media specialist will provide detailed instructions to students and families on how to borrow books and place books on hold.

#### **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. 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 whenever possible. Staff members are not responsible for any damages, thefts, or losses relative to personal possessions. This includes jewelry, money, and other valuables. Such items, when found, are to be brought to the main office. 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. Unclaimed lost and found items are periodically donated. Donation times will be announced before they occur.

#### **O. Pets/Animals**

**No pets or animals are permitted at 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. Parents are discouraged from bringing pets to arrival/dismissal.

#### **P. Recording Devices/Cell Phones/Smart Watches**

During the school day, from arrival to dismissal, students are not permitted to be in possession of or use tape recorders, video cameras, standard handheld cameras, disposable cameras, digital cameras, cellular telephones, Smart watches or other recording devices at Beechwood. These items will be confiscated by staff members if students are handling or using them during the school day. 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. Should these items be brought to school, they must remain away in the student's backpack.

#### **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 to use the telephone to directly contact a parent/guardian unless initiated/facilitated by a staff member. Parents/guardians should not initiate communication with their child on a personal device during the school day. Rather, contact the main office by phone or email.

### **VIII. CODE OF CONDUCT**

Please review the following general expectations for behavior and possible consequences with your child.

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, 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 the property of others. 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, as well as developmentally appropriate consequences guided by restorative justice practices.

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.

Please refer to [District Policy 5600](#) for additional information and details regarding the district's Code of Conduct.

## **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 the way they want to be treated, by keeping their hands and feet to themselves, and by using friendly language, playing fairly and including anyone who reasonably wants to join a game or other activity
- Practicing self control by being patient, 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 the lunchroom

At Beechwood, it is our intent to create a stable social and emotional learning environment for our students. Students are encouraged to make good choices through systems of positive reinforcement. 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 to promote pro-social future decision making. Logical consequences related to the misbehavior typically accompany a discussion/reflection opportunity with an adult following the mistake. Consequences will be determined according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student and the student's history of previous behavior concerns.

All staff members have the responsibility to address behavioral issues when they occur. 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. Significant Code of Conduct violation impacting the safety of others will be addressed by the Principal.

## **B. Possible Consequences & Remediation Measures**

- Staff member and/or Principal discusses the problem with the student
- Student is provided an opportunity for reflection and developmentally appropriate problem solving.
- Student remediates the situation as appropriate. This may include a verbal or written apology or restitution/restoration for damaged property.
- Consequences imposed may include a temporary loss of privileges, temporary removal from the classroom, or brief loss of recess time (up to 5 minutes).



- Significant and/or repetitive violations may result in loss of a major school privilege (i.e. classroom celebration, field day) or in-school/out of school suspension.
- Consequences imposed are determined at the discretion of the school administration, depending on the frequency and severity of the situation.
- A staff member or Principal will contact the parent/guardian (phone, email, letter) for recurring or significant concerns.

### **C. Acceptable Use Policy**

Appropriate computer use is an expectation for kindergarten, first, and second grade students. Staff members allow students to use their devices and appropriate educational websites as a resource only to aid in the learning process. See detailed guidelines in the district's [Acceptable Use Policy](#).

### **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 minimal distraction.

Students must wear shoes that promote safe play inside and outside. Strapless sandals and/or flip flops should not be worn to school. Sneakers must be worn on physical education class days. Students will have to sit out if appropriate footwear is not available.

Head accessories worn for religious purposes or medical concerns are permitted.

### **E. 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 are to remain in their seat for the entire ride.
2. Students are not permitted to eat or drink on the bus. This includes gum chewing, candy, water bottles, etc.
3. Littering is not to occur.
4. Students must use appropriate language on the bus.
5. Students must use an "inside voice" and are not permitted to scream or make excessive noise on the bus.
6. Students must keep their hands and bodies inside the bus at all times.
7. Students are not permitted to throw objects or spit out of the window.
8. Students are not permitted to throw or shoot objects on the bus.

9. Vandalism is not permitted on the bus. This includes writing on bus seats (floors, ceilings, sides, and windows) and/or ripping/cutting bus seats.
10. Fighting and horseplay are not permitted on the bus.
11. Bus drivers deserve the same level of respect as do all teachers and other staff members at school.

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, or dismissed at their stop to an adult other than their parent/guardian, a note must be sent to the main office. The school will complete 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 Code of Conduct 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.

#### **F. Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB)**

The Mountainside School District is committed to providing an educational environment for all students, employees, and volunteers that is safe, civil and free from Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB). "Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, as defined in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents that:

1. Is reasonably perceived as being motivated by either any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender,

- sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic;
2. Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds, as provided for in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15.3;
  3. Substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; and that
    - a. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
    - b. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
    - c. Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

HIB behaviors can take many forms including but are not limited to: slurs, rumors, jokes, demeaning comments, cartoons, pranks, gestures, physical attacks, threats, or other written, verbal, electronic, or physical actions. Some of these behaviors may not meet the definition of the harassment, intimidation, or bullying law, but may violate building, classroom, or program conduct rules and will be dealt with by the building administration, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

After a full investigation has been completed, if it has been determined that an HIB act has occurred, counseling, corrective discipline, and/or referral to law enforcement will be used to change the behavior of the perpetrator and remediate the impact on the victim. False reports or retaliation for harassment, intimidation or bullying will also result in disciplinary action. District policy ([Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying, File Code 5512](#)) fully explains the HIB Law as well as interventions and remediation that building and district administrators may recommend. Please familiarize yourself with this policy by reading it in its entirety. The policy, as well as procedures, can be found on the [district's website](#).

HIB allegations should be reported to the Principal using the [HIB Reporting Form for Families](#). This can also be found on the district's website. Parents are also encouraged to bring any concerns to their classroom teacher, and/or the school's anti-Bullying Specialist, Mrs. Ramona Kuznedelov 908-301-9104 x378.

## IX. 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. As a reminder, this link to the district's [general communication procedures and chain of command](#) can help to point you in the right direction depending on the nature of your question or concern.

## X. APPENDIX

[Board of Education Policy 5512 – Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying](#)  
[Mountainside School District Calendar](#)

### Beechwood Arrival and Dismissal Times:

Grade	Regular Day	Early Dismissal	Delayed Opening
Kindergarten, 1st & 2nd Grades	Arrival: 8:15 - 8:30 am  Dismissal: 2:55 - 3:10 pm	Arrival: 8:15-8:30 am  Dismissal: 12:45 - 1:00 pm	Arrival: 10:15-10:30 am  Dismissal: 2:55 - 3:10 pm
P.E.A.K. AM Class	8:15-11:15 am	8:15-10:15 am	10:30-12:15 pm
P.E.A.K. PM Class	12:00-3:00 pm	11:00-1:00 pm	1:15-3:00 pm

### Genesis Parent Portal Link:

<https://parents.c1.genesisedu.net/msd/sis/view?gohome=true>