

DEERFIELD SCHOOL
Mountainside, NJ
STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR GRADES 3-5



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

Mrs. Suzanne Jenks
Deerfield School Principal

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page(s)
I. Mountainside School District Vision	2
II. Mountainside School District Mission	2
III. Mountainside School District Goals	2 - 3
IV. Overview of Student Handbook Components	3
V. Academics	3 - 5
VI. Attendance	6 - 8
VII. School Programs and Services	8 - 11
VIII. Policies and Procedures	11 - 18
IX. Code of Conduct	18 - 23
X. Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying	23 - 24
XI. A Final Note	24
XII. Appendix	24

Board of Education Policy 5512 – Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

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 Student Learning 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. OVERVIEW OF STUDENT HANDBOOK COMPONENTS

Elementary school educators are committed to pursuing and maintaining an academically excellent, developmentally responsive, and socially equitable learning environment for every student. Regarding this commitment, we have identified parents/guardians as partners in the educational process and have created the Student Handbook to inform you and your child of the various student rights and responsibilities pertaining to academics, attendance, and conduct. Disciplinary measures have been identified according to Titles 6 & 6A of the *New Jersey Administrative Code* and Title 18A of the *New Jersey Statutes*. We urge you to read and review this school document with your child so that your child's elementary school experience is one rooted in clear expectations.

V. 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, elementary school students are to expect to receive 1-1.5 hours of homework per evening. For more specific homework policy information, parents/guardians can contact individual teachers.

If a student is absent for any reason, it is the student's responsibility to gather missed assignments from teachers upon the student's return to school, complete missed

assignments based on a schedule arranged by the teacher and student, and submit missed assignments to the teacher. In general, students will be allowed **two days** to make up missed work for each **one day of absence**. Teachers shall make reasonable accommodations to extend time for students.

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) 232-8828, extension 300 or 301 and request work. 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. so that anticipated missed assignments can be completed by students while they are absent from school (if possible). 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.

Student vacations are discouraged during the time school is in session. **Teachers are not responsible to provide work to students who will be missing school for unexcused reasons. (i.e. family vacations scheduled during school hours)**

B. Grading

Grades 3-5 use a standards based grading system. Teachers will be using the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Language Arts Literacy (Reading and Writing), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies to monitor the academic progress of students.

Reporting student achievement is based on a 1-4 numerical system:

4 = Exceeds standards.

Extends key concepts, processes, and skills. Student performance demonstrates an understanding of the knowledge and skills beyond expectations and consistently shows evidence of higher level thinking.

3 = Achieves standards.

Consistently grasps and applies key concepts, processes, and skills. Student performance demonstrates a thorough understanding of the knowledge and skills expected at this grade level.

2 = Approaching standards.

Beginning to grasp and apply key concepts, processes, and skills. Student performance demonstrates a partial understanding of the knowledge and skills expected at this grade level.

1 = Needs support.

Not grasping key concepts, processes, and essential skills. Area of concern that requires support. Student performance does not demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge and skills expected at this grade level.

Throughout the school year, student achievement in math, reading, and writing will be communicated to parents on a regular basis, in addition to the student report cards.

C. Report Cards

Students in grades 3-5 will be graded on trimesters. They will receive report cards three times a year: December, March, and June. Students will receive a report card from their homeroom teacher that includes grades from their specials teachers: art, health, library, music, physical education, STEAM, and instrumental music (if applicable). Specials teachers will also use the 1-4 standards based grading system detailed above.

Students will also receive marks in Behaviors that Support Learning. Those areas will be scored using the following guide:

C = Consistently

U = Usually

S = Sometimes

I = Infrequently

Report cards will be available for viewing on Genesis. Questions related to report cards are to be directed to your child's teacher(s).

Trimester Marking Period	Trimester Dates	Genesis Portal Open to Families
1 st (T1)	9/5/24 - 12/6/24	Friday, December 20, 2024
2 nd (T2)	12/7/24 - 3/14/25	Friday, March 28, 2025
3 rd (T3)	3/15/25 – 6/20/25	Thursday, June 26, 2025

D. Standardized Testing

Standardized tests are administered during the elementary school years. The purpose of these assessments is to determine how well students have mastered the skills and concepts identified in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

Assessment	Grade	Administration Dates
NJSLA LAL & MATH	3, 4, 5	April 28, 2025 - May 30, 2025
NJSLA-S SCIENCE	5	April 28, 2025 - May 30, 2025

*These dates are tentative and subject to change.

Standardized test scores are mailed home once the district receives the results.

VI. 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.
- 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 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.
- COVID-19 Quarantine and Absences: The District will implement student exclusion and quarantine practices as directed by the NJDOH and Westfield Department of Health. All questions regarding timeframes and processes should be directed to the school nurse.
 - Deerfield - Mrs. Branco, sbranco@mountainsideschools.org or (908) 232-8828 x304.

B. Late Arrivals/Early Dismissals

Students are expected to be in their homerooms by 8:20 a.m. Students who arrive late to school are to report directly to the main office upon entering the school. The main office will then issue passes to students who are late to school before they proceed to their classes.

Grades 3-5

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 the 10th late arrival, the student will serve a lunch detention the day of the late arrival.

Upon every subsequent 4th late arrival, the student will serve a lunch detention the day of the late arrival.

Grades 6-8

Upon the 4th late arrival, the student will receive a morning detention. Parents will receive a letter from the school with the details of the detention including the date, time, and location.

Upon every subsequent 4th late arrival, the student will receive a morning detention.

Upon the 8th late arrival, a conference with the parent and the school principal will be arranged.

Students' lates will reset on the first day of each marking period.

Early Dismissal

Students who wish to be dismissed early from school must have a written request to do so from a parent/guardian. Notes for early dismissal can be indicated in the attendance tab in Genesis. 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 office, at which time, he/she may be asked to display personal identification. This is for security purposes.

Siblings who are under the age of 18 will not be permitted to sign students out under any circumstances. Students being dismissed early from school will be called to the main office just prior to the stated dismissal time. If the student is returning later in the day, the student is to sign in with the main office upon arrival and receive a pass before proceeding to class.

VII. 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 elementary school students is contingent upon continual communication.

Staff members can be contacted by telephone at (908) 232-8828 followed by the respective extension. A list of staff members, telephone extensions, and e-mail addresses is linked to the district 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 8:00 a.m. and are required to remain in the building until 3:20 p.m. At Back-to-School Night, parents/guardians are encouraged to ask teachers for an appointment for a parent conference.

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.

If a parent/guardian wishes to schedule a conference with a staff member(s), that parent/guardian is to contact the staff member(s). Parents/guardians of third, fourth, and fifth grade students are to be aware that conferences can be scheduled. A conference is to be scheduled for the week of Parent/Teacher Conferences in November so that parents/guardians can meet with their child's teachers to review student progress for the first marking period. In most instances, the counselor and Principal are available to meet with parents/guardians in conference settings if appropriate.

Additional school information is available to parents/guardians through the district website (<http://www.mountainsideschools.org>).

B. Support Services

Counseling

Ms. Annabella Ross, aross@mountainsideschools.org

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 counselor is instrumental in dealing with the many personalities and challenges associated with elementary school as the counselor addresses various developmentally responsive themes. Specifically, the elementary school counseling program focuses on the following areas: transition/orientation, character education, crisis intervention, problem solving, individual school-based counseling, small group school-based 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)

Deerfield 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 complete evaluation of the student to determine eligibility for special education support.

Child Study Team

Deerfield provides special education services to classified students through 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.

Nurse

Mrs. Sonia Branco, sbranco@mountainsideschools.org

The Deerfield 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 Child Study Team and RTI Committee.

AIM (Academic Intervention for Mastery)

Mrs. Natalie Crisafulli, Math Specialist, ncrisafulli@mountainsideschools.org

Mrs. Michelle Cruz, AIM/Special Ed Teacher, mcruz@mountainsideschools.org

Deerfield has implemented basic skills instruction as one of its support services. This program, AIM, includes instruction in the content areas of language arts literacy and mathematics and is available to students during school hours. Students are eligible for this supplemental program based on teacher recommendations, assessment data, and the RTI Committee. The teachers who provide this instruction collaborate with the respective classroom teacher primarily through an in-class model and monitor student progress in a similar vein.

MLs (Multilingual Learners)

Mrs. Lori Topel, ltopel@mountainsideschools.org

Deerfield students whose primary spoken language is one other than English are tested to determine their level of English proficiency. During this process, state criteria are utilized to ascertain eligibility for assistance in language acquisition. Any student who falls below the cut-off score will receive direct instruction in English for one class period per day.

Gifted and Talented

Mrs. Suzanne Jenks, sjenks@mountainsideschools.org

Deerfield students are evaluated annually for acceptance and continuation in the District's Gifted and Talented Program. This program provided students identified with high abilities in one or more areas with opportunities that will challenge them in the regular classroom setting, as well as accelerated enrichment programs that will enable them to make continuous progress in school. All aspects of the programming and criteria will follow the Mountainside School District Board of Education Policy 2464. Additional information on Gifted and Talented can be found at this link:

[Mountainside School District Gifted and Talented Program](#)

C. Extracurricular Programs

Activities

The Deerfield activity program is designed so that elementary school students can explore their interests. Information regarding the activities and clubs available will be sent home at the start of the school year. Some activities are available for different grade levels based on the nature of the activity.

Performing Arts

There are several opportunities for elementary school students to participate in performing arts. These programs consist of the following: Junior Band for the 5th Grade students, Chorus as part of the general music curriculum, and possibly the school play production. Whole group instrumental and vocal instruction prepare our band and chorus students to perform at school concerts, community affairs, and additional school events.

Student Council

The Student Council is an active service association, which has made charitable donations as a result of its fundraising efforts. The Student Council is comprised of middle school homeroom representatives, and eighth grade students serve as officers following an annual election. The officers are responsible for organizing, coordinating, and leading school spirit activities, projects, and assemblies.

VIII. 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. Assemblies

Assemblies may occur at various times throughout the school year. When attending assemblies, students will be accompanied and supervised by staff members. Students are expected to proceed to and from assemblies in an orderly fashion with a minimum amount of noise. Audience members are to commend assembly participants through applause. There is to be no whistling, booing, or excessive noise made during assemblies. Students who choose not to demonstrate proper behavior will lose the privilege of attending assemblies. Constant talking during assemblies will not be tolerated.

B. Bicycles

Students are permitted to ride bicycles to school. **Students must walk their bicycle on the sidewalk when other students are present during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up.** Students with bicycles must secure them in the racks with their own locks. Two racks are located in the front of the school. One is near the field to the left of the driveway exit, and a second rack is located near the middle school doors. A third rack is located in the back of the school near the gym entrance. E-bikes and/or electric scooters or batteries **cannot** be secured inside the building. The school is not responsible for bicycles that are stolen. Those students who ride bicycles to school are reminded that New Jersey state law dictates that individuals **14 years of age and younger are required to wear a helmet when riding a bicycle.** As such, students are to store bicycle helmets in their hallway lockers when they enter school. Students may not ride and/or bring skateboards, roller blades, or scooters to school for safety reasons and storage purposes. Parents/guardians are to remind their child to cross with the assistance of the crossing guard.

C. Books/Equipment

Students are responsible for the care of all books, equipment, and materials that are assigned or loaned to them during the school year. Fines will be levied in June for any marks, ripped pages, or additional damages inflicted by students. Parents/guardians and students are reminded that fine amounts may be for the replacement cost of the damaged or lost book or equipment based upon the level of damage.

D. Building Appearance

Deerfield School is kept very well by our custodial staff. 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.

E. Bus Evacuation Drills

New Jersey state law requires schools to conduct bus evacuation drills for all students. 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. Students are not to jump out of the bus. 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.

F. Cellphones/Smartwatch or Wearable Technology

Staff members recognize that students need to be able to communicate with their parents/guardians before, during, and after school hours about family obligations, after-school activities, jobs, appointments, carpooling, etc., therefore, students will be permitted to bring cellphones/smartwatches to school. **Hand held or wearable electronic devices capable of photographic, video, or telephone communication are not allowed to be used during the school day without permission from a staff member. Teachers/staff are NOT responsible for determining whether a device has the use of data or not. Therefore, all cellphones and wearable technology is required to be turned off and stored in a locker during the school day.**

These devices must be turned off and stored in hallway lockers during school hours, which is from 8:20 a.m. - 3:00 p.m, unless specific permission has been granted by an administrator or staff member.

Picture taking in school with personal cell phone without direction or permission of a Staff Member is strictly prohibited.

Posting of pictures on the internet without permission (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Text, etc.) may be subject to discipline according to cyberbullying policies.

Cell phones or other hand held or wearable electronic devices in the classroom or in use without permission will be confiscated. The device will be returned at the end of the day and a letter will be emailed to the parent/guardian. On the third offense students may lose the privilege to bring their cell phone/devices to school. Parents/guardians should call the main office (908)232-8828 ext 300 or 301 if they need to get a message to their child during school hours.

Students shall be personally and solely responsible for the security of their cell

phones and/or electronic devices. The school is not responsible for theft, loss, or damage of a cell phone, or unauthorized calls made on a cell phone.

G. Computers (School)

The district Chromebooks and computers serve as informational and instructional resources for students and staff members. While students utilize the media center and individual Chromebooks, students are reminded that the equipment is not to be vandalized in any way, shape, or form. Absolutely no food and drinks of any kind are permitted near the equipment. Students whose misuse of their Chromebook results in damage or repairs will be responsible for the cost of the repair per the [Chromebook policy](#). Student use must follow all guidelines established in the District's [Acceptable Use Policy](#).

H. Delayed Openings/Early Dismissals/Emergency School Closings

In the event of a delayed opening, Deerfield School will open at 10:20 a.m. This is 2 hours later than usual. Deerfield bus students will be picked up 2 hours later than their daily pickup time. When there is a delayed opening, parents/guardians will receive a call, text, and/or email from School Messenger, a service provided by the district. The Mountainside School District website (www.mountainideschools.org) is another resource for this information. Third, fourth, and fifth grade students will have their regularly scheduled lunch periods when we have delayed openings.

Should an early dismissal occur, school will close at 12:50 p.m. with a limited lunch to be served, meaning a full, hot lunch selection will not be available. Parents/guardians will receive a call, text, and/or email from School Messenger, 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, text, and/or email from School Messenger. The Mountainside School District website is another resource for this information. Parents/guardians are advised to plan ahead and to make arrangements for child care should no one be home during the school day.

I. Drop Off/Pickup

For students who are transported to and from school by car, the respective parents/guardians are to adhere to these guidelines to ensure their child's safety.

The start of the school day is 8:20 a.m. With this in mind, parents/guardians are not to drop off students prior to 8:05 a.m. There is no supervision available for students dropped off prior to 8:05 a.m. Parents/guardians who are dropping off students at the start of the school day may use the Central Avenue entrance for the front of Deerfield School or the Sawmill Road entrance at the rear. The Sawmill Road entrance is for drop off in the back of Deerfield School during the **morning only** from 8:05 to 8:15 a.m. Once the doors close at 8:15 a.m. and staff is no longer supervising outside, drop off students **MUST** use the front entrance.

Students coming to meet with a teacher for extra help in the morning will be

required to receive a pass from the particular teacher prior to arriving in the morning. If a student does not have a pass, he/she will have to wait in the main office if the student was transported by bus. Students coming to meet with teacher for extra help in the morning will meet the teacher in the foyer at the main entrance of Deerfield.

Parking of cars is to be in parking lot spaces only so as to assist with the flow of traffic along the designated, coned off route. Parents/Guardians dropping off should pull forward as far as possible in the circle. **Students should exit vehicles as quickly as possible and enter the building using the entrance door nearest the car. Students who require additional time to exit a car should have parents/guardians park in a designated parking space and use the crosswalk.**

J. Electronic Devices/Readers/Toys

Electronic Readers (Nooks, Kindles, etc) that **do not have cellular capabilities** (text or calling) are allowed in school to be used in the same manner as an independent reading book. The reader may be brought to class, but may not be shared with other students. No games may be played during school hours.

Electronic games such as PSP are permitted in school. However, these devices must be turned off and stored in hallway lockers during school hours meaning from 8:20 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Students are to store these devices securely in their hallway lockers prior to homeroom and are not to remove them until they exit the school.

Staff members will confiscate these items if students are seen handling or using them in school. The consequences will be the same as misuse of cell phones. (See page 13.)

Students shall be personally and solely responsible for the security of their electronic devices. The school is not responsible for theft, loss, or damage of an electronic device.

Toys are considered to be disruptive to the learning process and are not permitted in school. This includes playing cards and laser pointers/pens. Articles of this nature will be confiscated by staff members if students are handling or using them. Once a staff member has confiscated a toy or other disruptive article, it will be turned over to the principal. The first time this occurs, the article may be picked up by a parent or guardian. The second incident will result in the article being returned on the last day of the school year.

K. Field Trips

Field trips are designed to stimulate student interest and inquiry. Field trips provide opportunities for social growth and development and are considered appropriate extensions of the classroom or school program. In order to attend a field trip, students must provide school officials with signed permission slips. As for conduct, students may be denied the privilege of attending a field trip if their behavior shows

a negative pattern. Students and parents/guardians are also to be aware that the Behavioral Guidelines extend to field trips. All students will be required to follow any health protocols required by the location.

L. Fire Drills and Safety and Security Drills

New Jersey state law requires schools to conduct fire drills and School Safety Drills. Every classroom and shared space such as the gymnasium has posted drill procedures as well as a map of escape routes.

During a safety 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. In collaboration with the Mountainside Police Department, staff and students will be trained and practice school safety drills on a regular basis. Students are to follow the lead of staff members and police during Safety and Security Drills. Parents will be notified of safety drills throughout the school year.

M. Hallway Passage

If a student needs to use the bathroom while in class, the student must obtain permission to do so from the teacher and utilize the classroom system. Students who wish to visit the nurse must have a staff member contact the school nurse prior to going; except in the case of a true emergency. **Students are not permitted to telephone parents/guardians to request to leave school.** This must go through the nurse's office. Also, students may request to see the counselor at any time for assistance with any school or personal difficulties. Students may ask their teacher to notify the counselor they would like to schedule a meeting. Before meeting with the counselor, students must report to their classroom teacher for attendance purposes.

N. Hallway Traffic/Backpacks and Bookbags

Students are expected to walk on the right side of the hallways. No running is permitted in the school building. Students are to be orderly and reasonably quiet whenever they are in the hallways in an effort not to disturb classes that are in session. **To assist with the flow of hallway traffic and to adhere to security protocol student backpacks and bookbags with wheels are to be kept in hallway lockers during the school day.** Students who participate in band and bring an instrument to school with them, must take the instrument to the band room, prior to homeroom, if the instrument cannot be secured in a locker. Horseplay is strictly prohibited when students are moving through the hallways.

O. Lockers (Hallway)

Third, fourth, and fifth grade students are required to utilize the lockers provided by the school.

Hallway lockers are designed to provide students with a safe place to store their books and clothing when they are not in use. Non-essential items such as jewelry, large amounts of money, and other valuables are not to be brought to school or kept in a hallway locker. The school is not responsible for items that are stolen or lost.

To properly maintain hallway lockers, students are to refrain from adding permanent fixtures to hallway lockers and defacing hallway lockers with writing. Students are expected to clean out hallway lockers on a regular basis and during the end of the marking period cleanouts. Also, hallway lockers are the property of the Mountainside Board of Education and are subject to periodic inspections by staff members and/or administrators.

For periodic locker inspections, the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution safeguards the privacy of individuals by protecting them from unreasonable searches and seizures by government officials. However, the New Jersey State Supreme Court has stated the standards applicable to school searches differ from those which apply to police searches of criminal suspects. Deerfield School reserves the right to reasonable searches of lockers and possessions within these guidelines.

The search will be justified before it is conducted. That is, the staff members conducting the search will have reasonable grounds to suspect that the search may reveal a student has violated a school rule and/or is jeopardizing the health or safety of students or staff members. The extent or scope of the search will be related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age of the student or the nature of the incidents.

P. Lunch Money

Deerfield families are encouraged to take advantage of the online lunch accounts, www.payschoolscentral.com to pay in advance for lunches. Should a student not have a lunch, lunch money, or (point of sale credit) to spend, he/she may use the classroom telephone to call home. In the event no one is available to drop off a lunch or lunch money for a student, the student is to see the cashier in the cafeteria to obtain a meal. If a pattern emerges whereby a student is frequently taking advantage of this courtesy, the office will contact his/her parent/guardian. For safety reasons, students are not permitted to share food. Free and Reduced Price School Meals are available to students and families who qualify. To apply for the Free and Reduced Price School Meals, please click [HERE](#). Additional a la carte items, such as other drinks and snacks will be available for purchase.

Q. Media Center

The media center serves as an informational and instructional resource for students and staff members. Third, fourth and fifth grade students will visit the media center

during their assigned, weekly media center period, along with additional periods when the media specialist and teachers choose to collaborate on joint lessons, booktalks, research, digital literacy, etc.

Students may have up to two books on their account. Library materials must be returned or renewed before the due date. Books are loaned for two weeks and can be renewed if the student needs more time to finish reading the book.

Library items may be returned early during homeroom and/or open library times. Students will also have additional time to visit the library to borrow items during the week with teacher permission. Overdue notices will be issued to students during class.

If the media center resources are not repeatedly returned in a timely fashion the media specialist will contact the parent/guardian about ways to address this issue for the individual student. It is ultimately the responsibility of the student to pay for any media center materials that are lost or damaged. The library catalog is online and can be accessed at <https://dfs-msd.kari.opalsinfo.net/bin/home>

R. 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.

S. Nut Free Classrooms

A peanut and nut free classroom is a classroom where all food brought into the classroom is peanut and nut free. This includes not only food with explicit peanut and/or nut products listed in the ingredients, but also those that may contain a warning such as: "may be processed in a facility that contains nuts or peanuts". A nut free classroom pertains to snacks in the classroom, holiday treats, and food used in the classroom curriculum.

T. 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 four locations: the metal bins near the 6th grade hallway, the box in the boys' locker room, the box in the girls' locker room, and the main office for valuables and items other than clothing.

U. 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 principal and school nurse in advance.

V. Recording Devices

Students are not permitted to take pictures or videos at Deerfield School except when it is part of a teacher approved and school-related project. Cell phones and cameras 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 principal. 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 parent/guardian needing to pick up the item from the main office.

W. Telephone Usage

A student is permitted to use the classroom phone with teacher supervision to call home. Students are not permitted to use personal cell phones during the school day (8:15 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.) unless they are supervised by a staff member in the main office. During the school day, the nurse or school staff member will contact parents if a child is to be picked up. **Students may not use cell phones to make arrangements to go home without the knowledge of school personnel.**

IX. CODE OF CONDUCT

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 practice restorative methods alongside remediation methods to address conflict through reflection, reconciliation and accountability where harm has occurred.

Addressing student behavior issues involves different degrees of support and interaction depending upon the behavior and its severity. These steps will be followed by school staff members.

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

A. Low Level Incidents

Before the following steps occur, the staff member will address the inappropriate

behavior with the student and contact the parent/guardian via telephone, email, or note as to how he/she is going to proceed. Typical low level incidents include but are not limited to: tardy to class or school, unsigned paperwork, inappropriate dress, inappropriate personal belongings, inappropriate displays of affection, behavior interfering with instruction, undirected profanity, and inappropriate cellular telephone or hand held/wearable electronic device usage.

The individual staff member will then meet with the student to identify the inappropriate behavior, discuss the inappropriate behavior and help the student problem-solve, and involve the student in writing an action plan for a change in behavior that the student and staff member agree upon. Restorative actions will be included in each action plan.

The individual staff member may also choose to conduct a staff member/parent/student conference.

If a change in student behavior is not observed after the first conference, a second conference will take place with the staff member and the student during which a second action plan will be written by the student with the staff member. A parent/guardian and counselor may be present at this second conference.

If a change in student behavior is not observed after the second conference, the student will be referred directly to the principal. Upon receipt of a referral, the principal will take the appropriate administrative action as outlined in the consequences section of the Code of Conduct.

B. Middle Level Incidents

Before the following steps occur, the staff member will address the inappropriate behavior and contact the parent/guardian via telephone, email, or note as to how he/she is going to proceed. Typical middle level incidents include but are not limited to: repeated behavior interfering with instruction, horseplay, defacing school property, lying, cheating, or forgery, abuse of pass or privilege, directed profanity, being disrespectful to staff or student, and cutting class or detention.

The individual staff member will then meet with the student to identify the inappropriate behavior, discuss the inappropriate behavior and help the student problem-solve, and involve the student in writing an action plan for a change in behavior that the student and staff member agree upon. Restorative actions will be included in each action plan.

The individual staff member may also choose to conduct a conference with the parent and/or counselor present.

If a change in student behavior is not observed after the conference, the student will be referred directly to the principal. Upon receipt of a referral, the principal will take the appropriate administrative action as outlined in the consequences section of the Code of Conduct.

C. High Level Incidents

Staff members will complete a student disciplinary referral form and submit it directly to the principal for high level incidents. High level incidents include but are not limited to: leaving school without permission, school absence without parent/guardian permission, computer violation, gross insubordination, racial or ethnic slur, threats, repeated bullying, harassment, vandalism, or destruction, theft, inappropriate dialing of “911,” tampering with safety devices, endangering the safety of others, possession or use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco, inciting a fight, fighting or assault, possession or use of matches/lighters, and possession or use of weapons.

D. Consequences for Low, Middle, and High Level Incidents

Upon receipt of a referral, the principal will take the appropriate administrative action. Students and parents/guardians are to note that appropriate administrative action may include: confiscation, change of inappropriate clothing, lunch/recess detention, after-school detention, counselor or RTI referral, peer or staff mediation, suspension or removal of school privileges, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, police contact, restitution assignment, and recommendation for expulsion.

Most behavioral issues can be resolved with staff members before administrative referral. At all times, the principal reserves the right to intervene and take action if student behavior is deemed inappropriate or in violation of district-wide policies.

E. Acceptable Use Policy

Appropriate computer use is an expectation for third, fourth, and fifth 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. A copy of the Acceptable Use Policy was supplied on Genesis.

F. 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. We recognize that each pupil’s method of dressing is an expression of the pupil’s personal style and individual preferences. We expect student apparel choices to be neat, clean, and modest throughout the school day.

Students may not wear clothing or engage in grooming practices that present a health or safety hazard to the individual student or to others. Dress should not interfere with school work, create disorder or disrupt the educational program, cause excessive wear or damage to school property, and prevent the student from achieving their own educational objectives because of blocked vision or restricted movement. Staff members will determine whether or not the dress or grooming of students meets these expectations.

The following would be examples of apparel inappropriate to the school setting:

- Clothing that is excessively short, tight and/or too revealing of one's anatomy
- Clothing or accessories that create a safety risk
- Clothing with inappropriate messages (for example: alcohol, language, symbols, drugs, etc.) or content offensive to others
- Holes in clothing must be placed in appropriate areas
- Headwear such as hats, hoods, or bandanas worn in the building, this excludes religious head accessories or medical concerns.
- Underwear must not be visible
- Footwear must be worn in the building at all times.
- Crocs or other types of loose fitting footwear without backs or ties are not appropriate for recess. Students wearing inappropriate footwear will not be able to participate in activities involving running during recess.

Students who do not adhere to the student dress code will be referred directly to the principal's designee. Students will be required to change the inappropriate clothing. Parent/guardian notification will be inclusive of dress code offenses.

G. Gum

Students are not allowed to chew gum during school hours.

H. Lunch

Our aim regarding lunch is to provide students with a pleasant dining atmosphere. This requires appropriate student behavior. As soon as students enter the cafeteria, they are expected to adhere to these rules. Should students choose not to adhere to these rules, consequences will be imposed.

Lunch Rules:

- Students must eat in the location that has been designated for their grade level.
- Students must be seated at designated table spots at all times and may not stand in groups to socialize.
- Students must ask permission of the lunch supervisor if they need to use the restroom, or leave their designated area for any reason.
- Students must walk while in the cafeteria, particularly when entering the line for food.
- Students must wait until their tables are called in order to purchase lunch.
- Students are not to cut or engage in horseplay while in line.
- Every student is responsible for cleaning up his/her own garbage.
- Students may not throw food, or any other object, for any reason.
- Students may not share food or purchase snacks for another student.
- Disrespect or insubordination toward cafeteria staff members/lunch supervisors will not be tolerated; cafeteria staff members deserve the same level of respect as do teachers and other staff members

No food is to be taken out of the cafeteria unless the student has been given permission to do so by a lunch supervisor. On occasion, exceptions to this rule occur when students are receiving extra help from a teacher, are working on a project or school event, are making up schoolwork, or are serving lunch/recess detention.

Although students are generally not permitted to take food out of the cafeteria, students are allowed to carry water bottles with them throughout the school day. Students are not permitted to carry beverages other than water with them.

Consequences for Lunch Incidents:

If a student does not follow the lunch rules, a lunch supervisor will change the student's seat for an extended period of time after meeting with the student to identify and discuss the inappropriate behavior. If a change in behavior is not observed after these steps have occurred, the student will either be assigned lunch/recess detention in which he/she does not have recess or will be referred to the principal. Parents/guardians will be contacted in regard to lunch offenses as needed.

I. 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 are listed below.

Bus Rules:

- Students are to remain in their assigned seats for the entire ride;
- 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;
- Students are not permitted to use profanity or foul language on the bus;
- Students are not permitted to scream or make excessive noise on the bus;
- 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;
- Students must keep their hands and bodies inside the bus at all times;
- Students are not permitted to throw objects or spit out of the window;
- Students are not permitted to throw or shoot objects on the bus;
- Vandalism is not permitted on the bus. This includes writing on bus seats (floors, ceilings, sides, and windows) and/or ripping/cutting bus seats; and
- Fighting and horseplay are not permitted on the bus.
- Cell phones and other electronic devices are not to be used on the bus and follow the same disciplinary actions as use in school. (See page 13.)

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 brought to the main office so that a staff member can fill out a bus pass for the bus driver.

Consequences for Bus Incidents:

If a student does not follow the bus rules, he/she will be referred to the principal. 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, after-school detention, suspension or removal of bus privileges, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, restitution assignment, and/or police contact. At all times, the principal 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.

X. Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

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. Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB) behaviors refer to any written, verbal, cyber or physical act, whether or not the act occurs on or off school grounds that has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school by:

- Physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property; or
- Substantially interfering with a student's education; or
- Severely, persistently, or pervasively creating an intimidating, threatening or hostile educational environment

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 rise to the level of harassment, intimidation, or bullying but still may be prohibited by building, classroom, or program rules and will be dealt with by the building administration, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

After a full investigation has been completed, if it has been determined that a 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 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 can be reported to classroom teachers, the principal, and/or the individuals listed below.

District Anti-Bullying Coordinator
Mrs. Jessica Vierschilling
908-232-8828 x201

School Anti-Bullying Specialist
Ms. Annabella Ross
908-232-8828 x303

XI. 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.

XII. APPENDIX

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