

Mary E. Dardess Elementary School

Chatham, New York



Parent Handbook

Kristen Reno, Principal
Stacey Muscato, Assistant Principal

2023-2024

CHATHAM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MARY E. DARDESS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

50 Woodbridge Avenue

Chatham, NY 12037

www.chathamcentralschools.com

(518) 392-1530

Board of Education

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Marianne Pierro, Vice President

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Dr. Sal DeAngelo

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District Business Administrator
Administrator of Educational Services

Brian Simon	392-1542 x 4052
Michael Chudy	392-2400 x 4030
Lisa Ruud	392-2400 x 4053

MED Elementary School Principal
MED Elementary Assistant Principal

Kristen Reno	392-2255 x 3001
Stacey Muscato	392-2255 x 3036

Guidance Counselor
Health Office

Renee Morgan	392-2255 x 3014
Mary-Noelle Fabiano RN	392-2255 x 3004

The Board of Education, its officers and employees, shall not discriminate against any student, employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, or disability.

The Mission of the Chatham Central School District is to provide students an education that nurtures intellectual curiosity and focuses on academic and cultural foundations. Our students will graduate with the knowledge, problem-solving abilities and character needed to participate ethically, adapt, succeed and contribute in their future educational, career, and community endeavors.



CHATHAM CENTRAL SCHOOLS

2023-2024

Dear Parents and Students:

Welcome to Mary E. Dardess Elementary School, fondly known as M.E.D.

I am very proud of our staff, our building and facilities, and the excellent support traditionally given us by parents and the Chatham community. It is my sincere hope that the students will find our school enjoyable and educationally rewarding.

This handbook has been prepared to provide students and parents with information concerning elementary school. It should serve as a reference tool. Our school and your home are partners together in an effort to provide the best education possible for each student.

If you have any questions or feel I can be of any assistance to you, please call.

Very truly yours,

Kristen Reno

Kristen Reno
Principal

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ACADEMICS

ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES (AIS)

Our school provides services to students who have been identified as being at risk of falling below the state learning standards in English/language arts and math. Services can include additional instruction that supplements the general curriculum. Eligibility for A.I.S. is determined by performance on state assessments and/or in accordance with district assessment procedures.

BANANA SPLITS

WHAT IS BANANA SPLITS?

Banana Splits is a support group designed to give students the opportunity to share their feelings with others who have experienced similar changes in their families.

WHO ATTENDS THE PROGRAM?

Any student who has experienced the transition of parental separation, divorce, death of a parent, or remarriage of a parent may attend. The students meet in groups formed according to their age or grade level.

WHERE DOES THE GROUP MEET?

Each group meets in a private location within the Mary E. Dardess school building. Students are urged to share what happens in the group at home. However, confidentiality is stressed at all other times.

HOW DOES THE BANANA SPLITS GROUP WORK?

We usually sit around a table and work on art and game-like activities that are designed to stimulate discussion on certain topics (i.e., going to court, moving, changing schools). All discussions are led by professionals trained in counseling.

CHILD STUDY

The child study is an intervention team that assembles for the purpose of ensuring that a child's academic, behavioral, attendance, and/or health needs are being met in school, so she/he has a successful school experience. The team is made up of a core group of teachers and staff. Others who are directly involved with the student may also be invited to attend.

EMAIL ADDRESSES

Each student will be issued an email address for educational purposes. These email addresses are for internal use only. Students will not be able to send or receive emails outside the Chatham School District domain. The district reserves the right to monitor emails sent or received within the district system.

HOMEWORK

Homework provides an excellent opportunity for developing good study habits and for reinforcing and practicing lessons. Parents should share the responsibility for student learning by:

- Providing a study area free of distractions.
- Giving assistance but letting the child do the work.
- Helping create a homework habit at the same time each night.

Arrangements can be made for a friend to pick up homework assignments or for a parent to pick up if the office receives a call in the morning. Assignments will be available after 12:00 noon.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

State law provides that all students receive physical education instruction. All students are required to wear sneakers for safety and performance reasons.

STATE ASSESSMENTS

Each year students in grades 3-5 are given a standardized assessment in English Language Arts and Math. In grade 4 students are given an additional assessment in Science. These assessments are given in the spring and are used to measure student performance.

ATTENDANCE

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Regularity of attendance and punctuality are important for children beginning with their first day in school. The earlier children learn that school is their responsibility, the more satisfactory their progress will tend to be in school.

State law requires every student to attend school on every school day unless she/he has a legal excuse. Therefore, absence, tardiness, or departure from school before the end of a school day will be excused for the following reasons:

- Illness of the pupil.
- Serious illness or death in the pupil's family.
- Serious, contagious, or epidemic disease in the household where the pupil resides.
- Doctor or dental appointment which cannot be arranged at any other time.
- Required presence in court.
- Days approved for religious observance, upon prior written request of the parent or guardian.

Absences and tardiness for the reasons set forth above will be excused by the Principal upon receipt of a written, signed explanation from the parent/guardian.

As part of the attendance policy, the school will communicate with you in writing when your child has been absent 10 days and again at 15 days.

RIGHT TO BE NOTIFIED

Chapter 617, Laws of New York, 1985, mandates that every school district will inform persons in parental relationship to elementary school pupils (K-6) of such person's right to be notified when their child is deemed not in attendance at school. This law was passed in an effort to allow parents to search for a missing child as soon as it is realized. **Please call the M.E.D. attendance line at (518) 392-2255 ext. 2 by 8:30 a.m.** if you are keeping your child home from school.

TARDY ARRIVALS

Tardy arrivals at school must be recorded on the student attendance card. Repeated tardiness will result in intervention.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The Superintendent may close the district schools or dismiss students and staff early when hazardous weather or other emergencies threaten the health or safety of students and personnel. If conditions affect only a single school, only that school shall be closed; if they affect only a part of a school day, schools shall be closed only that part of the day. In making the decision to close schools, the Superintendent will consider many factors, including the following principle ones that relate to the safety and health of children: weather conditions (both existing and predicted), driving, traffic, and parking conditions affecting public and private transportation facilities, actual occurrence or imminent possibility of an emergency condition that would make the operation of schools difficult or dangerous, inability of teaching personnel to report for duty which might result in inadequate supervision of students.

Television and radio stations that school calls in the event of closing are:

- School Closings Network (reaches WFLY 92, WGY 810, WGNA, WNYT 13, WRGB 6, WTEN 10, WRVE The River, WYJB B 95.5, WXXA TV).
- WHUC 1230 AM, 93.5 FM, 98.5 FM, 106.9 FM
- Columbia-Greene Media, The Times Union, Time Warner Cable News

EXTENDED STUDENT VACATIONS

Chatham Central School District recognizes good attendance as having a positive impact on student achievement and a positive school experience. Vacation days outside of the official school calendar are technically illegal absences and require a marking of "unexcused" on the student attendance card. If it **is** necessary to remove your child from school for an extended period of time, please contact your child's teacher.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

The Board of Education will provide, as appropriate, instruction outside of school for students who are medically unable to attend. A physician must document the anticipated length of absence, the reason, and that the child is not healthy enough to be able to participate in educational activities. Homebound instruction for elementary level students is usually provided for one hour per day or 5 hours per week, only for days that school is in session. A plan will be established to assist the student transitioning back into school, if needed.

ATTENDANCE AND EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Mary E. Dardess Elementary School needs your support in ensuring that students arrive at school on time. Students must be in school by 9:30 am and in attendance for at least three hours on the day of an event or school activity in order to participate. If you have any questions about the attendance status of your student, please don't hesitate to call the main office at (518)392-1530.

CLASS PLACEMENT

CLASS PLACEMENT

During springtime, the staff of the MED Elementary School begins to consider next year's class placements.

Many factors go into the construction of each class. For example, as we build the class lists, the Principal, Assistant Principal, classroom teachers, and resource personnel consider the following:

- strengths and weaknesses of each child
- boy/girl ratio
- academic balance of the class
- behavior characteristics
- ability levels
- social and emotional needs
- maintenance of heterogeneity of classes

As a result of the need to consider all the factors listed above, **parents are not able to pick the teacher of their choice** for their child. However, parent input is welcomed and encouraged when a unique situation may exist.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

Chatham makes every effort to place students in the most appropriate learning level for a successful education experience. The following guidelines govern promotion and retention:

Students who do not make satisfactory progress in one or more of the basic subjects – reading, English/language arts, mathematics, social studies and science – shall have their cases considered on an individual basis and may be retained. A decision to retain a student shall be arrived at after conferencing with the teacher, psychologist, Principal and academic support teachers. Factors to be considered include teacher(s) recommendations, classroom achievement and attitude, standardized test scores if applicable, social, emotional and physical development. Final authority for grade placement rests with the Principal.

COMMUNICATION HOME

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The following is a summary of various kinds of communication we use:

Open House - an evening in which parents are invited to come to school to meet our teachers, usually held in the early fall.

Parent-Teacher Conferences - scheduled by teachers at mutually agreeable times, generally in November and March. However, if a problem exists, a conference may be held any time during the year.

Parent Portal – an internet based program which allows you to electronically access some of your student’s educational records, including schedules, attendance and personal information your family has on record with the school district to ensure that the district has the most current information available.

While these are our major forms of communication with parents, we urge parents to call and arrange a conference at any time during the year.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Good communication between home and school is an important factor in establishing a highly effective school program. Planned conferencing between parents and teachers is an important way to bring about understanding and close cooperation between the home and school. Close communication should be maintained through conferences with all parents, not just with those for whom the child's academic or other problems suggest the need for communication.

The school Principal is responsible for encouraging cooperation of teachers and parents in helping to meet the educational needs of pupils. Parent-teacher conferences, parent-student-teacher conferences, and parent-Principal conferences are encouraged methods. These conferences provide opportunities for open communication regarding administrative procedures, instructional programs, goals and objectives, and pertinent information regarding pupil progress.

Every effort should be made by parents and teachers to find mutually agreeable meeting times.

REPORT CARDS

The MED reports student progress on a trimester basis. All parents will be invited to meet with teachers to discuss progress at the parent conference.

DISCIPLINE

Mary E. Dardess Elementary School Statement on Discipline

The following statement of discipline reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the M.E.D. elementary school:

Every child is an individual and every situation has its own uniqueness. Appropriate behavior in the elementary school is essential for learning and living in our school. We strive for student conduct that is self-directed. Our intent is to be flexible to best meet the needs

of the child, the staff and the school. There are occasions when disciplinary action should be imposed to correct behavior and protect the rights of others.

FOOD SERVICES

SCHOOL BREAKFAST

The school breakfast program menu is printed on the reverse side of the monthly lunch menu. Breakfast cost is \$1.50 with a reduced charge for qualified students. Children may enter the building at 7:30 for the purpose of picking up breakfast. Breakfast will be served from 7:30 – 8:00 each morning.

SCHOOL LUNCHES

Hot lunches are served daily with alternate lunches of salads and sandwiches. Students have the option of bringing their own lunches from home. You may prepay for meals by making arrangements with our cafeteria or online at www.myschoolbucks.com.

Lunch costs \$3.10, which includes milk. Students may also buy milk separately, which comes in skim, 2%, 1%, and chocolate and strawberry varieties.

Menus are sent home monthly. Additional copies are available in the school office. The lunch menu is also posted on the district website.

Free and reduced price lunches are provided for eligible students. The forms for this program are sent home at the beginning of the school year. All information is confidential.

All menus and prices are subject to change.

HEALTH INFORMATION

FIRST AID

The school is responsible for giving first aid or emergency treatment only in case of sudden illness or injury to a pupil or a member of the staff. Further medical

attention in the case of a student is the responsibility of the parent or guardian, or the person designated for emergencies.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Under New York State law, all students entering or attending school are required to have written proof from a physician certifying that they have received immunization against Poliomyelitis, Measles, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Rubella, Mumps and Hepatitis B, Varicella and Meningitis as age appropriate according to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

As of July 1, 2018 New York State law requires that public school students must have a health examination when:

- They enter school as a new entrant (regardless of grade)
- They enter Pre-K, Kindergarten and grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11.

A copy of the health exam must be provided to the school within 30 days from when your child first starts at the school as a new entrant and when your child starts Pre-K, K, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11th grades

If a copy is not given to the school within 30 days the school will contact you. If your child has an appointment for an exam during this school year that is after the first 30 days of school, please notify your school's health office with the date.

The examination must be completed by a New York State licensed physician, physician's assistant or a nurse practitioner OR by a physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner who is licensed in a boarding state and must be documented on the New York State approved form.

MEDICATIONS FOR STUDENTS

The following guidelines ensure that all medications are managed safely at school:

- All medication, over the counter and prescription, must be provided by the parent and must be brought to school by a parent or responsible adult in the original labeled container. Prescription medication must be in a pharmacy labeled container. Prescription or over-the-counter medications can be given on a scheduled or “as needed” basis with a physician’s order and parent’s permission.
- A written physician’s order is needed for the nurse to administer any medication. The order should include name, dose, duration, reason for prescribing the medication and possible adverse reactions.
- Written permission from a parent/guardian is also needed.
- An “Authorization for Medication” form is available on the District website, under the “Health Services” tab for your convenience.
- The “Authorization for Medication” form may also be used for parent/guardian permission.
- Changes to medication orders during the school year must be authorized by the physician.
- All unused medication will be disposed of at the end of the school year if not picked up by the parent.
- All medication orders must be renewed annually.

EXCLUSION FROM PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- If there is a need for an alteration in physical education activities for your child due to an illness or accident lasting more than 1-2 days, a note from his/her physician is required. If the time limit of the exclusion is not specified

on the original note, a new note from the physician clearing your child to resume activity is required for them to be allowed to resume PE or other activities.

- For a brief illness or injury (1-2 days) a parent note is acceptable.

HEAD LICE

Head lice are a common health problem and most infestations occur among children ages 3-11. The school nurse will contact parents if a student appears to be infected. We recognize the difficult and time consuming treatment this problem requires and urge parents to contact the school nurse if live lice are found at home and to get advice from their family doctor about proper treatment for all household members. Students must be treated at home and will be reevaluated by the nurse upon return to school. To lessen the likelihood of head lice, children should be taught not to share hats, scarves, combs, brushes or other personal items that could transfer lice from one head to another.

SCHOOL RULES AND PROCEDURES

CAFETERIA RULES

These rules were developed by MED students:

- Walk – no pushing or shoving.
- Be a friend.
- Cooperate.
- Respect your environment.
- Be polite.
- No yelling.
- Keep the table and floor clean.
- Be nice to the cafeteria staff.

CONCERTS/SPECIAL EVENTS BEHAVIORS

Fourth and Fifth graders have the opportunity to participate in band, chorus and orchestra. They perform several times a year and are hard workers who enjoy the performing arts.

In order to show appreciation for the work they have done, please enter the performing area in-between selections if you arrive late and respect the performers by remaining silent while they perform.

DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT (DASA)/BULLYING

Bullying of a student by another student is strictly prohibited on school property, school buildings, on school buses, and at school sponsored events/or activities whether occurring on or off campus. The term “bullying” is understood to be a hostile activity which harms or induces fear through the threat of further aggression and/or creates terror. It often involves a differential in real or perceived power between the victim and perpetrator. The term bullying describes a range of harmful behaviors such as harassment, hazing, intimidation or discrimination. Conflict and confrontation often do not rise to the level of bullying or harassment, but their positive transformation or resolution will be sought through the District’s Code of Conduct and/or the character education programs. Bullying can take three forms:

- A) Physical (including, but not limited to, hitting, spitting, pushing, taking personal belongings);
- B) Verbal (including, but not limited to, taunting, teasing, name calling, making threats); and
- C) Psychological (including, but not limited to spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, or engaging in social exclusion, extortion, or intimidation).

Bullying may also occur as various forms of harassment and or hazing of students by other students (including pledging and/or a student’s initiation into or affiliation with a school or student related organization or team).

The harassment behavior may be based on any characteristic, including, but not limited to a person’s actual or perceived:

- race
- color
- weight
- national origin
- ethnic group
- socio-economic background
- religion
- religious practice
- disability

- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender (including gender identity and expression)

The district also prohibits “internet bullying” (also referred to as “cyberbullying”) including the use of instant messaging, emails, web sites, chat rooms, and text messaging when such use interferes with the operation of the school; or infringes upon the general safety and welfare of others.

However, it is important to note that a single negative as enumerated above may also constitute “bullying” (if not more misconduct) based upon the particular circumstances such as seriousness of the act and/or the intent of the actor.

Any student who believes that he/she is being subjected to bullying behavior, as well as any other person who has knowledge of or witnesses any possible occurrence of bullying, shall report the bullying to any staff member or the building principal. The staff member/building principal to whom the report is made (or the staff member/building principal who witnesses bullying behavior) shall investigate the complaint and take appropriate action to include, as necessary, referral to the next level of supervisory authority and/or other official designated by the District to investigate allegations of bullying. Investigation of allegations of bullying shall follow the procedures utilized for complaints of harassment within the district. Allegations of bullying shall be promptly investigated and will be treated as confidential and private to the extent possible within legal constraints.

Retaliatory behavior directed against complaints, victims, witnesses, and/or any other individuals who participate in the investigation of allegations of bullying is prohibited. Follow-up inquiries and/or appropriate monitoring of the alleged bully and victim shall be made to ensure that bullying behavior has not resumed and that all those involved in the investigation of allegations of bullying have not suffered retaliation.

DASA information and reporting procedures including a “Bullying Reporting Form” can be found on the District Website under the Bully Prevention link.

Concerns about bullying at M.E.D. can be addressed to our building Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) Coordinator:

Renee Morgan (518)392-2255 x 3014 morganr@chatham.k12.ny.us

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students may bring personal electronic devices subject to the following rules:

- Students are forbidden to use their personal electronic devices to harass, intimidate, discriminate, tease or threaten others. Cyberbullying is in violation of the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). DASA legally requires schools to investigate and respond to bullying incidents that occur in or out of school, which negatively affect the learning environment.
- Personal electronic devices may not be used during class time unless the teacher or other supervising personnel have granted permission.
- Students who access the Internet through a personal data plan or other means while in school or at a school event must follow the guidelines for Internet use as outlined in the Internet Use policy.
- Under no circumstances may students use personal electronic devices to record, take photos, videos or audio-recordings of others with the intent to embarrass, harass, intimidate, discriminate, tease or threaten others. During the school day, students may not record others without their explicit permission.
- Students who violate the electronic use policy will be subject to disciplinary procedures and consequences.
- Students are responsible for their *own* devices. M.E.D. is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged electronics.

OUTDOOR RECESS

Recess will be held outside everyday unless it is raining or unless the temperature, *with the wind chill*, dips below 20 degrees Fahrenheit. It is important that children dress appropriately for the weather. There is no provision for a teacher to keep a child inside. Should your child be too sick to go outside for fresh air, please keep him/her at home.

PICKING UP STUDENTS AT DISMISSAL

1. Send a note telling us of your intention to pick up that day, or a note stating this is a permanent situation.
2. Enter the building at the side entrance.

3. Follow the hall to the right into the cafeteria. Sign your child out.

In order to ensure student safety, parents/guardians are to submit a list of individuals who are authorized to obtain the release of their children from school. No student may be released to the custody of any individual who is not the parent/guardian of the student unless the individual's name appears on the list.

A parent/guardian may amend the list submitted pursuant to this regulation at any time. Certified copies of any court orders or divorce decrees provided by the custodial parent, which restrict the ability of any person(s) to seek the release of his/her child, shall be maintained in the M.E.D. main office.

Anyone who seeks the release of a student from school, must report to the main office and present satisfactory identification

If your child is a walker, he/she will be dismissed out the front door unless we receive a daily note or a permanent note stating the contrary. We will not know to change your child's dismissal plan unless you communicate that to us ***before 1:00 pm***. **Please do not use e-mail as the primary communication tool for reporting changes.** Teachers and office staff often don't check e-mail until the end of a day – too late to implement a change. Write all changes in a note to us and send it in with your child to share with his/her teacher.

PLAYGROUND RULES

Here are some basic playground use rules. (Developed by M.E.D. students)

- Treat others as you want to be treated.
- No snowballs, tackling or throwing sand or stones.
- Line up quickly when you hear the whistle blow.
- Take turns.
- Stay in assigned areas.
- Avoid stray animals.

- Obey adults on duty.
- Keep hands to self.
- Tell the adult on duty you need to go to the bathroom and tell when you return to the playground.
- Report any injury to the adult on duty.
- Stay away from the fence.
- Enter the classroom only when the teacher is there.

RIDING BICYCLES TO SCHOOL

Third, fourth and fifth grade students who submit permission in writing from a parent or guardian will be permitted to ride a bicycle to and from school. The Principal will authorize bike riding after a conversation occurs with the child on safety. If, in the judgment of the principal, the bike rider does not comply with safety rules and respecting the space of walkers, permission will be withdrawn.

The bicycle must be chained to the school bicycle rack each day. A strong chain and a good lock are recommended. Helmets must be worn every day.

SAFETY DRILLS

There will be unannounced safety drills during the school year. Students are expected to cooperate according to the directions given by staff members. These drills include fire drills, lockdown drills and duck and cover drills.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities are entitled to receive, at public expense, special education related services and/or supplementary aide and services as necessary to ensure a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, appropriate to meet their individual needs.

Each student identified as having a disability will have access to the full range of programs and services of the District, including extracurricular programs and activities, which are available to all other students enrolled in the public schools of the District.

Parents/guardians and students who desire further information on these programs and services should contact the Committee on Special Education Office at (518) 392-1542.

TRANSPORTATION

Parents Play Important Role In School Bus Safety¹

To have an effective safety program, safety awareness must begin at home.

Each year from September to June, hundreds of thousands of school vehicles travel the nation's highways and byways. They cover millions of miles daily, transporting students to and from school. (*Chatham Central School District transports approximately 1,300 students almost half a million miles last year.*) The areas may differ but the goal in every case is the same: to accomplish this task safely.

Much has been written concerning the manufacture of vehicles, training of drivers, planning of routes etc., but an often untapped resource - and a critical one in terms of the success in the ever-improving implementation of safety - is the parents and guardians of the passengers.

School bus drivers have their hands full. They must operate the bus safely in traffic with as many as 60 or more students behind them. There is only a minimum amount of time for drivers to participate in bus safety instruction.

Safety-awareness must begin and be consistently reinforced at home. The following points are suggested to parents:

- Stress the importance of remaining seated and reasonably quiet while the bus is in motion. This may sound elementary; but any parent who has traveled in a car with several rambunctious youngsters knows how distracting and unsafe it can be to have them yelling and jumping around.
- Provide young children with a school bag and remind them to use it to carry all their papers. Loose papers are a serious hazard. It is easy for a child to drop one. The paper may then blow in front of or under the bus. A distracted driver may not see a little child run to retrieve his or her treasure, resulting in a horrible tragedy.
- Train your children not to automatically expect traffic to stop for the red overhead flashers of the bus. Deaths and injuries result all too often when motorists either don't see or deliberately ignore these warning lights and fail to stop. Children should *always* look before crossing.
- Try to find an established time - not too early and not too late - to have your children leave home for AM pick-up. ***Remember, children should be at the bus stop before the established pickup time. If there is a question about the scheduled pickup time, ask the driver.*** Students on the streets or roads too early can get into trouble by horsing around, and students who are too late may throw caution to the wind in their fear of being left behind.
- **Warn youngsters about strangers who hang around the bus stop.**
- There is no requirement in law that entitles children to door-to-door transportation. (18 EDR 412, 19 EDR 583) It is also not possible for all children to travel equal distances to and from the designated bus stops. A natural consequence of safe, efficient, and economical routing of school buses is that some children will travel greater distances than others in traveling to and from bus stops (18 EDR 412). The safety of children in traveling to and from bus stops is the responsibility of the parents, just as it is for those children who do not qualify for transportation from home to school (19 EDR 59, 22 EDR 405).²

¹Public Safety Article extracted from *School Bus Fleet Magazine*

²New York State Education Department rulings extracted from *The Pupil Transportation Safety Institute* guide "Safe Routes – Safe Stops"

- Escort kindergartners and other young children riding the school bus to ensure that they arrive and depart the bus stop safely. (***Chatham Central School District bus drivers will not discharge a kindergartner unless a parent or guardian is visibly present at the bus stop.***)
- Have your children properly dressed for bad-weather days. Vehicles are often delayed on such days. Boots, raincoats, warm clothes, etc., will help prevent illness. On the other hand, properly dressed children survive quite nicely in the rain and snow. They do NOT need to be personally driven to school or kept inside until the bus arrives. Over-protectiveness in this area increases traffic hazards, especially on the school grounds and at the bus stop, causing further delays and accidents.
- Warn children that all motorists, including buses, have reduced visibility in certain kinds of weather making extra caution as a pedestrian necessary.

- Students of all ages at a bus stop should always wait at the established bus stop in an orderly manner, in an area away from traffic and clearly visible to the approaching bus driver. Children should wait until the school bus is fully stopped and the driver directs the student to board. Pushing and shoving toward a moving bus can have tragic results. Another means of contending with this problem is for the school district to have an assigned seating procedure. (*Many of Chatham Central School District bus drivers have an assigned seat policy. Bus drivers are authorized to assign seats as they see fit to ensure order and safety on the bus.*) Knowing a specific seat is waiting can reduce a child's urge to board too quickly.
- Discuss the safety hazards involved in throwing anything inside the bus or out of the bus window.
- Make sure your children know their name, address and phone number. Write it down on a 3" x 5" card and pin it to young children's clothing for the first few days of school. Later place the card inside their school bag. If children become confused, it will be much easier for the driver or teacher to determine where he or she should be dropped off if the information is readily available.
- Explain to your children that a bus route covers quite a bit of territory in many cases. Young children often are under the impression that the bus goes only from their stop to the school and back again. They can become very upset to find themselves traveling through unfamiliar areas.
- Familiarize yourself with evacuation procedures and discuss them with your children. Knowing what to do in an emergency or breakdown is crucial to everyone.
- If a designated parent or guardian is not present to receive a kindergarten student, the bus driver will return the child to the district for a parent to pick up. Elementary school children will not be dropped off at unauthorized stops and will not be released to a person at a bus stop unless that person is designated in writing by the parent or guardian.

Bus Rules for Student Behavior

1. All students will be required to wear masks until further notice; if a student fails to wear a mask, they will not be allowed to ride the bus.
2. Students shall arrive at the bus stop before the scheduled bus pickup time. The District's intent is that children are waiting at the bus stop when the bus arrives, so that the bus is not delayed.
3. Students shall wait in a safe place, clear of traffic and, where possible, at least fifteen feet from the edge of the road.
4. Students shall wait in an orderly manner and avoid horseplay or disruptive behavior.
5. Students shall cross the road or street in front of the school bus only after the bus has come to a complete stop and upon direction of the driver.

6. Students shall go directly to an available or assigned seat as applicable when entering the bus.
7. Students will not change seats while the bus is in motion.
8. Students shall not occupy a position in the school bus that interferes with the driver's operation of the bus or the vision of the driver to the front, sides, or through the mirror to the rear.
9. Students shall remain seated, facing forward and keep aisles and exits clear.
10. Students shall observe classroom conduct, be courteous and obey all directions from the driver promptly and respectfully.
11. Students shall refrain from throwing or passing objects on, from or into buses.
12. Students are permitted to carry only objects that can be held on his or her lap.
13. Students shall refrain from the use of profane, inappropriate or disrespectful language.
14. Students shall refrain from eating and drinking on the bus.
15. Students shall not carry hazardous materials, nuisance items, or animals onto the bus.
16. Students shall respect the rights and safety of others.
17. Students desiring to board or leave a bus at other than their assigned bus stop must have a signed note, approved by their school administration.
18. Students shall not extend head, arms, or other objects out of the bus windows.
19. Students will not drop trash on the bus and will keep the bus clean.
20. Students shall not use tobacco, alcohol, drugs or any other controlled substance on the bus.
21. The bus driver is authorized to assign seats, whenever he/she deems necessary for the safety and well being of the students on the bus.
22. Students riding on large buses are encouraged to use seatbelts. Students riding on buses with a capacity of nineteen or less, are required, by law, to wear seat belts.
23. Students shall avoid shouting and other excessive noise that may distract the driver.
24. Students shall not use cell phones or electronic ear pieces while loading and disembarking school buses.

VISITORS

ADULTS IN THE BUILDING

Adults are in the building by invitation (attending a meeting or event) or by design (volunteering in a classroom.).

Should a parent wish to visit a room, the teacher needs to have prior knowledge of the visit to determine how to disrupt classroom routine in the least possible way.

VISITATION GUIDELINES

Our school has many opportunities for families, friends and neighbors to come and visit. Some activities are intended to be open to everyone like our annual Halloween parade. Parents, younger siblings and grandparents are welcomed back into the classroom after our parade. Also, our Arbor Day celebration is to be enjoyed by all. However some activities are for students only and have limitations placed upon them due to space/occupancy concerns and other considerations. Birthday celebrations, for example, are generally held for the classroom children only.

VISITING THE SCHOOL

When picking up a child during the day, please go to the office.

In order for us to safeguard your children, it is necessary for you to sign your child out in the main office when picking him/her up early.

Parents arriving to pick up children should park in our short-term spaces. With so much traffic, parking around the circle is prohibited, as is parking near the loading dock. Short-term parking (less than 2 hours) is available in the diagonal spaces in the elementary lot (on the left as you come into the school grounds). These parking areas are clearly marked. There is a marked crosswalk to the school sidewalk from the parking areas.

All parents and/or visitors to the building must sign in at the front door and indicate their destination. This practice enables us to keep track of visitors and helps eliminate unnecessary or unplanned interruptions of your child's class and the teacher's lessons as well as ensure the safety of all students.

If there are to be changes in your child's regular routine, such as: being picked up early, someone else picking up, doctor or dental appointments, etc., please send a written note with your child. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE OFFICE WITH CHANGES FOR YOUR CHILD AFTER 1:00 P.M.**

As a visitor to our school, your behavior must conform to our district's adopted Code of Conduct.

Our staff wants to discourage older siblings leaving their own classrooms and school for MED events so they can remain involved in their own learning. They have had the opportunities to experience these events when they were students at MED.

Moms and dads will receive invitations to end-of-year picnics and younger siblings will also be invited to attend. We appreciate not having older siblings leaving school to attend a class picnic.

We are grateful for all our classroom volunteers and we benefit greatly from parent attention that does not have to be divided between supervising younger

children while trying to simultaneously teach at a learning center. Therefore, volunteers should not bring younger siblings along.

As always, the faculty, staff, administration and parents are committed to ensuring that all MED students are safe and engaged in a multitude of activities, events and programs that foster diverse educational and social experiences. Certain events, programs and activities as outlined above are only open to MED students or their immediate family members, while other events, programs and activities are opened to the community as a whole. Your cooperation, support and understanding are greatly appreciated by all stakeholders at MED. We value your participation in your child's education and look forward to your continued support to ensure MED continues to be the outstanding school it is because of that commitment and support. Thank you for your efforts.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please feel free to contact the class teacher or the Principal at 392-1530.

PLEASE NOTE: *Tobacco usage is not permitted at any time in the building or on school grounds. This applies to all school activities as well as after school events.*

VOLUNTEERS

We welcome parents and other individuals to serve as volunteers in our program. Volunteers can aid the school, working under the direction of the teacher, by:

- Assisting children while the teacher instructs a small group or an individual.
- Listening to a child read.
- Helping a child complete teacher-prepared assignment.
- Reading to children.
- Clerical work – filing, typing.

- Sharing an expertise.

Qualifications for volunteering include:

- Being dependable and prompt.
- Having an interest in children and an ability to relate to them in a positive way.
- Being respectful of the confidential nature of the job.

We greatly appreciate our volunteers and respectfully ask that younger siblings are not included in the volunteer activity.

All volunteers are required to sign a confidentiality guideline before going into a classroom. If a volunteer does not work well in the building, we reserve the right to discontinue the relationship.

Appendix I

HIV/AIDS Policy

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HIV/AIDS POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes the public concern over the health issues surrounding Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The Board recognizes, based upon the current state of medical knowledge, that the virus associated with AIDS is not easily transmitted by casual social contact.

The Board further recognizes the privacy rights of students diagnosed with HIV infection or AIDS and their right to a free appropriate public education; the rights of HIV infected employees to privacy and reasonable accommodations; the rights of all non-infected individuals to a safe environment free of any significant risks to their health; and the rights of all students to instruction regarding the nature, transmission, prevention, and treatment of HIV infection, pursuant to the Commissioner's Regulation, Part 135.3.

No individual shall be denied access to any program or activity sponsored by or conducted on the grounds of the district, solely on the basis of his/her status as an HIV-infected individual.

Students

It is the policy of the Board that:

1. A student's education shall not be interrupted or curtailed solely on the basis of his/her HIV status. HIV-infected students shall be afforded the same rights, privileges, and services available to every other student.
2. No student shall be referred to the Committee on Special Education solely on the basis of his/her HIV status. A student who is infected with HIV shall be referred to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) only when the student's disability interferes with his/her ability to benefit from instruction. Such referral shall be made in accordance with Part 200 of Commissioner's Regulations.
3. If a student who is HIV-infected requires special accommodations to enable him/her to continue to attend school, the student shall be referred to the appropriate multi-disciplinary team as required by §504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
4. No disclosure of HIV related information involving a student shall be made without first obtaining the informed consent of the parent, guardian or student on the Department of Health (DOH) approved form. (See *the generic Department of Health Authorization of Release of Confidential HIV Related Information.*)

Employees

It is the policy of the Board that:

1. No employees shall be prevented from continuing in his/her employment solely on the basis of his/her HIV status; such employees are entitled to all rights, privileges, and services accorded to other employees and shall be entitled to reasonable accommodations to the extent that such accommodations enable such individuals to perform their duties.
2. No disciplinary action or other adverse action shall be taken against any employee solely on the basis of his/her status as an HIV infected or a person with AIDS. Such action will only be taken where, even with the provision of reasonable accommodations, the individual is unable to perform his/her duties.
3. All employees shall have access to the district's exposure control plan as required by the federal Office of Safety and Health Association (OSHA).

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4. In accordance with OSHA regulations, training in universal precautions and infection control shall be offered to all employees and shall be provided to every employee with potential occupational exposure.

Confidentiality

- Any information obtained regarding the HIV status of an individual connected to the school shall not be released to third parties, except to those persons who are:
 1. named on an Authorization for Release of Confidential HIV Related Information form;
 2. named in a special HIV court order; or
 3. as indicated in Public Health Law §2782, when necessary to provide health care to the individual (i.e., to the school physician and the school nurse).
- Any employee who breaches the confidentiality of a person who is HIV infected shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with applicable law and/or collective bargaining agreement.
- To protect the confidentiality of an HIV infected individual, any documents identifying the HIV status of such individuals shall be maintained by the school nurse (or another authorized individual) in a secure file, separate from the individual's regular file. Access to such file shall be granted only to those persons named on the Department of Health approved Authorization for Release of Confidential HIV Related Information form, or through a special HIV court order. When information is disclosed, a statement prohibiting further redisclosure, except when in compliance with the law, must accompany the disclosure.

HIV/AIDS Testing

No school official shall require a student or employee to undergo an HIV antibody test or other HIV-related test. In accordance with OSHA regulations in the event of an incident involving the exposure one individual to a potentially infectious body fluids of another individual, particularly blood or any other fluid which contains visible blood, an HIV test may be requested but NOT required. The request and refusal must be documented.

However, school officials shall not be precluded from requiring a student or employee to undergo a physical examination pursuant to Education Law §§903 and 913, when other illness is suspected (e.g., tuberculosis), as long as no HIV antibody test or other HIV-related test is administered without the individual's informed consent as required by Public Health Law §27-F.

To implement this policy, the Superintendent of Schools is directed to arrange for staff training, to distribute copies of this policy to all employees of the district, and to include it in the district's student handbook, and to establish an advisory council to make recommendations on the development, implementation, and evaluation of HIV/AIDS instruction as a part of comprehensive health education.

Cross-ref: 4315.1, AIDS Instruction

5420, Student Health Services

Ref: 29 USC §§794 et seq. (Rehabilitation Act of 1973)

20 USC §§1400 et seq. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)

42 U.S.C. §12132, et seq. (Americans with Disabilities Act)

34 CFR Part 104

29 CFR Part 1910.1030

Executive Law §296 (Human Rights Law)

Education Law §§903; 913

Public Health Law, Article 27-F

8 NYCRR §§29.1(g); 135.3; 136.3

An Implementation Package for HIV/AIDS Policy in New York State School Districts, NYS
HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Program, June 17, 1998

Adoption date: February 29, 2000