



**Hill and Plain Elementary School**

**Northville Elementary School**

**Handbook 2023 - 2024**

**Hill and Plain Elementary School**  
**Northville Elementary School**

August 2023

Dear Students and Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to the 2023 - 2024 school year!

This Student-Parent Handbook is set-up to provide you with information about the policies and procedures in the New Milford elementary schools. We urge both first time and returning parents to read this handbook carefully. It is also available on the schools' web pages at [www.newmilfordps.org](http://www.newmilfordps.org). Please feel free to contact us with any concerns or questions you may have about the handbook's contents.

As you know, parents' involvement in their children's education is vital for student success in school. By working together, we will strive to make this a rewarding and successful school year for the wonderful children you share with us. We are excited to begin this new school year and thank you for your help and support!

Sincerely,

Mr. Eric Williams

Principal, [Hill and Plain Elementary School](#)

Mrs. Gwen Gallagher

Principal, [Northville Elementary School](#)

**STUDENT PARENT HANDBOOK**  
**2023 - 2024**

**Hill and Plain Elementary School**

60 Old Town Park Road

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**Northville Elementary School**

22 Hipp Road

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[www.newmilfordps.org](http://www.newmilfordps.org)

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## **NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **OUR MISSION**

The mission of the New Milford Public Schools, a collaborative partnership of students, educators, family, and community, is to prepare each and every student to compete and excel in an ever-changing world, embrace challenges with vigor and respect, and appreciate the worth of every human being and contribute to society by providing effective instruction and dynamic curriculum, offering a wide range of valuable experiences, and inspiring students to pursue their dreams and aspirations.

# **NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

## **CENTRAL OFFICE PERSONNEL**

Dr. Janet Parlato, Ph.D., Superintendent	860-355-8406
Ms. Holly Hollander, Assistant Superintendent	860-354-3235
Mrs. Teresa Kavanagh, Director of Human Resources	860-210-2200
Mr. Matthew Cunningham, Facilities Manager	860-354-6265
Mr. Anthony Giovannone, Director of Fiscal Services and Operations	860-354-8726
Mrs. Laura Olson, Director of Pupil Personnel and Student Services	860-354-2654
Mrs. Jeffrey Turner, Technology Director	860-210-2615
Mrs. Sandra Sullivan, Director of Food & Nutrition Services	860-354-3712



## **BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS**



Pete Helmus, Chairperson

Wendy Faulenbach, Vice Chairperson

Leslie Sarich, Secretary

Tammy McInerney, Assistant Secretary

Eric Hansell

Sarah Herring (not pictured)

Brian McCauley

Tom O'Brien

Olga Rella

## **ACADEMIC RECORDS**

The school will maintain a cumulative record for each student. The records will include registration materials and information about academic achievement, grade level, attendance, standardized test scores. Student medical history is kept in a separate file. Student records are confidential. A parent or legal guardian has the right to examine their child's file, and may arrange to do so by contacting the principal. See Appendix A, [BOE Policy #5125](#). Student educational records will be handled in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g ["FERPA"]. As such, the release of student information or transfer of records will take place only with the written consent of the parent or legal guardian except as otherwise provided for under FERPA. This is handled through the grade-level administrator's office.

## **ACCIDENTS**

When a student becomes ill or is involved in an accident at school during the school day, he/she is immediately sent to the nurse. Should further medical treatment be needed, the nurse will immediately attempt to contact the parents. If a parent cannot be reached, persons who have been listed as contacts on the child's registration card will be contacted in an attempt to locate the parent. If the parent cannot be located, the principal, with advice from the nurse, will determine the best course of action. Please note, the nurse does not call home for every visit to the nurse's office. ***It is important that parents/guardians update, as often as necessary, their child's PowerSchool account - learn more on the district [Technology webpage](#).***

## **ADMITTANCE INTO BUILDING**

For everyone's safety, all exterior doors are kept locked during the day. Our schools also have camera surveillance. When you enter the building at the front door between the hours of 8:50 a.m. and 3:15 p.m., you will need to ring the buzzer, state your name, and the reason for your visit. The receptionist will unlock the door and direct you to the main office. If this is the first time someone is visiting the school, they will be asked to present a photo ID that will be scanned into our security system. Visitors will then be issued a name tag to wear for the duration of their visit.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

All students are provided with bus [transportation](#) and are encouraged to use it regularly. When children arrive at school, they are expected to enter the building immediately and proceed to the appropriate location (ie: classroom or playground). **Student supervision begins at 8:30 a.m. at both schools. For your children's safety, please do not drop them off before the time noted above unless they are participating in a school-sponsored activity.**

Parents who bring their children to school must adhere to parking and traffic regulations. **Drivers must not pass a parked school bus with blinking flashers and extended stop sign.** Parents or visitors who come into the building are required to check in at the school office where a security program is used for all visitors. More detailed information about the system can be found in the Visitors section of this handbook. The safety of the children in our care is always our main concern.

The school day ends at 3:15 p.m. At 3:15 p.m. we begin to call students by bus number to load the buses. All students will be sent home on their assigned bus **unless there is a note from the parent** notifying us that a child will be picked up at school. Please note, however, that regularly picking up your children early is disruptive and deprives them of educational opportunities.

### **Opening and Dismissal Times**

#### **2 Hour Delayed Opening:**

10:50 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

*There is no a.m. EXCEL*

#### **3 Hour Delayed Opening:**

11:50 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

*There is no a.m. EXCEL*

#### **Accelerated/Weather Related Early Dismissal:**

8:50 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

*There is no p.m. EXCEL*

## Early Dismissal:

Grades K-2 8:50 a.m.-1:00 p.m

EXCEL a.m. 8:50 a.m.-10:55 a.m.

***There is no p.m. EXCEL***

## **Attendance**

### **Connecticut State Board of Education**

*Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences*

*Adopted June 27, 2012*

The following definitions are for the use by Connecticut school districts and schools for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of section 10-198a of the Connecticut General Statutes (Policies and procedures concerning truants), and for the purpose of reporting truancy, pursuant to subsection (c) of Section 10-220 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The use of these definitions for state purposes does not preclude districts from using separate definitions of excused and unexcused absences for their internal uses (including decisions on promotion/retention, grading and disciplinary action).

### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

By state statute, a student is allowed 9 excused absences each year. A student's absence from school shall be considered excused if written documentation of the reason for the absence has been submitted within two school days of the student's return to school or in accordance with Section 10-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes and meets the following criteria:

- A. For **absences one through nine**, a student's absences from school are considered excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation (a written note from parent and/or Dr.);  
The following situations do not count toward a student's 9 excused absences:
  - a. Field Trips
  - b. Testing
  - c. Travel for school activity or athletics
  - d. Suspension from school
  
- B. For the **tenth absence and all absences thereafter**, a student's absences from school are only considered excused for the following reasons:
  - a. student illness (Note: all student illness absences must be verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of absence)
  - b. student's observance of a religious holiday
  - c. death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family

- d. mandated court appearances (additional documentation required)
- e. the lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation is required for this reason)
- f. extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance.

### **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

All absences from school will be considered unexcused unless:

1. the absence meets the criteria of excused as stated above
2. the absence is due to discipline issued by the school
3. all absences after the 9<sup>th</sup> absence meet the criteria outlined in section B above

**Please Note: All absences *not reported* by a parent/guardian call and a note are considered unexcused, even if they would otherwise satisfy the criteria for an excused absence.**

**All absences excused (1-9) or unexcused (10+) require a note, even if there was a call. This note may be scanned/photographed and emailed to the school by parent/guardian with 10 days of the absences.**

Parents/guardians are urged to coordinate family vacations with the school calendar for vacation periods. Parent/guardian requests for student absences from school for vacations or trips must follow the above State Laws for excused and unexcused absences. The mutual goal of all is to keep all such excused absences to a minimum.

Students who are not in the building for **at least half of the day (4 hours on a full day/ 2 hours on a half day)** will be marked absent for the day per the CT State Department of Education *see Appendix G*

### **EXCESSIVE ABSENCES**

Connecticut law requires school personnel to promptly notify the State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families under certain circumstances, including suspected educational neglect. Consequently, given that chronic absenteeism or tardiness seriously impedes a student's academic progress. if a student continues to be chronically absent\*, the principal (or designee) may contact DCF or the New Milford Juvenile Review Panel.

1. Students absent five (5) or more consecutive days due to illness or any communicable disease must have a doctor's statement (could be by phone) of good health to the school nurse prior to re-admission to school.

2. Given reasonable cause to believe a student is truant from school, the school administration may ask the school social worker to visit the student's home to verify the cause of the absence. Such home visits may be scheduled outside of regular school hours.
3. The administration reserves the right not to excuse students who are chronically absent and to require written verification of reason that student is not in school.

\* ([Connecticut State Statute Sec. 10-198a](#) – Truant: Any child between the ages of seven and sixteen who has had four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences in any school year. Sec. 10-Habitual Truant: Any child having twenty (20) unexcused absences within a school year).

## **AUDIENCE CONDUCT DURING SCHOOL PERFORMANCES AND ASSEMBLIES**

Respectful and exemplary behavior is expected from our students at assemblies. Throughout the year, we have many opportunities to enjoy performances from our students as well as guest performers. These performers deserve a courteous and attentive audience. Parents who are attending any school event or performance with their younger children must supervise their children at all times for the safety of everyone. When performances are held in the gymnasium, children may not climb on or use the physical education equipment.

Students are taught to demonstrate courtesy toward performers and consideration of fellow audience members. Rules that apply in public venues such as movie theaters apply during school performances. Thus, students are required to remain seated, still, and quiet throughout a performance unless participation is encouraged by the presenter(s). Clapping is the acceptable means of demonstrating appreciation for a performance. Behaviors such as whistling, hooting, and yelling are unacceptable ways of demonstrating enjoyment during an assembly. Booming is strictly prohibited.

If parents are invited to school performances during the day, students still must sit with their classes. Parents, siblings, and guests will be provided seating in a separate area.

## **AUDIENCE CONDUCT FOR EVENING PERFORMANCES**

Please help us reinforce the common courtesy that is expected from students during school day presentations. In addition to the rules above, we ask that all audience members abide by the following:

- All children (students and their siblings) should remain seated **with** their parents.
- Students may not walk in the hallways unattended.
- For obvious reasons, no adult or child is permitted to climb on any pieces of gym equipment.
- Families should remain for the duration of the performance, not just until their children have completed their part in a presentation. If the performance is hampered by inappropriate actions of the audience, the performance may be stopped. Persons (adults and/or students) may be asked to leave the performance.

**Please Note:** Students must be present in school to attend afterschool or evening events. Students who are absent the day of the event, or who are serving in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, or expulsions may not attend.

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

We know that birthdays are very special days that often your child enjoys sharing with their classmates. Individual teacher recognition of student birthdays may vary, but the day will be celebrated with your child. We ask that **non-food** treats be provided in order to avoid food allergy issues and to observe the district wellness policy. If you choose to provide food for a classroom celebration, please note the following.

A list of items that may be purchased locally will be provided at the start of the school year, and will be available in the school office. In addition, the District's Food and Nutrition Services Department provides a list of items that meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and may be purchased through the Department's office at 860-354-3712. For more information about the Connecticut Nutrition Standards, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's Healthy Food Certification website: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Healthy-Food-Certification>.

Here is the [list of acceptable foods](#).

Please note: teachers will determine at the beginning of the year, which children will not be able to participate in parties for religious reasons and provisions will be made to accommodate them.

## **BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITATIONS**

Invitations to birthday parties and other private party invitations are not to be distributed at school due to the disruption they create in the instructional environment. The PTO at each school provides a parent directory, which can be used for mailing invitations.

## **BULLYING**

New Milford Public Schools are committed to promoting and maintaining a positive learning environment where all students are welcomed, supported, and feel safe in school, socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically. We stand committed to continuing our efforts to eradicate mean behavior and bullying in all forms, as we strive to create a learning community that values respect and responsibility for all. As always, we work in partnership with parents, our School Resource Officer and community members in reinforcing this message and communicating our collective intolerance for “mean behavior.” The purpose of the [Board of Education’s Policy #5131.911](#) is to address the existence of bullying in schools and to establish the district’s [Safe School Climate Plan](#). A full definition of “bullying,” including “cyberbullying,” is set forth in Board Policy 5131.911, which can be reviewed on the New Milford Public Schools’ website as part of the “Series 5000 – Students” policies, located at: <https://www.newmilfordps.org/boepolicies>

Bullying is prohibited on school grounds, at school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions or programs whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the local or regional board of education. Bullying is also prohibited *outside* of the school setting if such bullying results in any of the following: (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Any form of discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is also strictly prohibited. Any student who engages in bullying as defined in the board policy may be subject to discipline up to, and including, suspension and expulsion. Any school employee who fails to respond to bullying as required by this policy and the district’s Safe School Climate Plan may be subject to disciplinary action.



## **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

The schools' bus vendor is [AllStar Transportation](#) and the office can be reached at 860- 350-2880. Bus route numbers are listed on the district web site prior to the opening of school. Children are to ride their assigned bus to and from school. There can be no changing of buses for activities such as scout meetings, play dates with another child, sports, etc. It is a parent's responsibility to provide transportation to after-school activities.

The school and bus drivers are not responsible for children's supervision at the bus stop, so parents need to carefully watch their children to ensure their safety. The bus driver will not drop off your child unless an adult is waiting at the bus stop.

It is very important for parents to continually check the school calendar so that they are aware of changes in dismissal times, school holidays, and vacation days. In case of possible inclement weather, parents should go to the district web page, or watch TV to find out if school will be opened two (2) hours late, canceled, or dismissed early. If there is a 2-hour delay, the school day will begin at 10:50 a.m., and there will not be any morning EXCEL classes. If there is a 3-hour delay, the school day will begin at 11:50 a.m., and there will not be any morning EXCEL classes. The bus schedule of student pick-up times will also be adjusted to two (2) OR three (3) hours later than the regularly scheduled student pick-up times.

Teachers and bus drivers educate students about bus safety and appropriate bus behavior; however, students whose parents review the rules and expectations with them on a consistent basis more thoroughly understand the importance of these issues and usually make good decisions while in bus transport.

For safety's sake, children should know and follow all bus rules. Ignoring or disobeying these rules will result in disciplinary action, ranging from the suspension of the student's bus-riding privileges up to and including suspension and expulsion from school. More information is on the tables that follow.

**Children may not ride a different bus without a pass issued by the office; passes are only issued for children to ride to another address for childcare.** Any long-term bus changes must be approved by the Director of Fiscal Services at (860) 354-8726.

Students should:

1. Respect private property while going to and from the bus stop. Keep off lawns and porches.
2. Stand back, away from the road, until the bus has come to a complete stop.
3. **STAY OUT OF THE ROAD!**
4. Respect other individuals and their property, both on and off the bus.
5. Follow the reasonable directions of the driver and other responsible adults.
6. Exercise caution at all times, especially while getting on and off the bus.

Students should not:

1. Fight or “fool around” on the bus.
2. Enter or exit the bus other than at their designated bus stop.
3. Use profane/abusive language or gestures towards others.
4. Put any part of their body or objects of any sort out of the windows.
5. Move out of their seats or face the rear while the bus is in motion.
6. Ride on any bus after having their bus privileges suspended or revoked.
7. Obstruct the aisle with feet, legs, books, instruments, or other objects.
8. Fail to sit in an assigned seat if so designated.
9. Create excessive noise.
10. Damage or deface the bus or equipment. (Damage may result in financial restitution in addition to other administrative action.)
11. Smoke, display matches/lighters, or carry flammable materials.
12. Litter, eat food, chew gum, or drink beverages.
13. Tamper with doors, windows, or other bus equipment.
14. Throw objects either inside the bus or at the bus while outside.
15. Transport live animals.
16. Be disrespectful towards the driver and fellow passengers.
17. Possess weapons, alcohol, or drugs.

## **BUS TRANSPORTATION: CODE OF DISCIPLINE**

Students riding school buses are bound by the same behavioral expectations in force during the school day. Violations of proper behavior on school buses may result in loss of bus privileges as well as further disciplinary consequences including suspension and expulsion. Smoking, threatening, fighting, disruptions, and use of offensive language are among behaviors that will not be tolerated on the buses. Furthermore, any student who inflicts damage upon a bus will be held financially responsible for the cost of that damage.

Students who leave school grounds during the day without authorization are not permitted back on campus to ride a bus home. School buses are equipped with video cameras; students should be aware of the possibility of videotaping.

The following sanctions apply to student violations of the school's and the school district's behavioral expectations on or around school buses during regular daily bus runs, as well as on field trips and co-curricular bus trips, unless otherwise noted:

Disciplinary actions are defined at three levels given below:

### Level I

- eating food, chewing gum, or drinking beverages
- littering the bus
- refusing to use an assigned seat
- refusing to follow reasonable directions of the driver
- use of profane or obscene language
- leaving one's seat while bus is moving
- placing hands, feet, or head out the window
- pushing or shoving others
- disrespect of bus driver

After an initial warning, subsequent infractions will subject the student to the possible suspension of his or her bus-riding privileges in increasing increments of three (3) days, ten (10) days, and thirty (30) days. **Should such behavior persist or escalate, or should the administration determine that this behavior resulted in, or posed a risk of, injury either to the student or to another individual, the student may be subject to further disciplinary consequences, including suspension and expulsion.**

### Level II

- Fighting/assault/battery
- Entering/exiting through rear door
- Interfering with driver controls
- Smoking
- Throwing articles
- Vandalism

The first offense will subject a student to ten (10) days suspension from riding. Subsequent offenses will result in the suspension of bus-riding privileges in increasing increments of thirty (30) days and sixty (60) days. In all cases involving vandalism, the student and/or

parent/guardian will be assessed for all costs. **Should the administration determine that this behavior resulted in, or posed a risk of, injury either to the student or to another individual, or should this behavior persist or escalate, the student will be subject to further disciplinary consequences, including suspension and expulsion.**

### **Level III**

- Using/possessing/distributing/selling a controlled substance
- Using/possessing a firearm, weapon, or dangerous instrument
- Carrying flammable materials
- Engaging in any other conduct which constitutes grounds for suspension and expulsion under Board Policy Section 5114

Student will **be suspended** and reported to the Superintendent for possible expulsion for up to one year.

## **CAFETERIA EXPECTATIONS**

In order for children to have a pleasant lunch experience, these procedures have been instituted. Quiet conversation is allowed and encouraged in the cafeteria. Children are expected to:

- Remain seated while eating.
- Keep hands to themselves.
- Remain quiet when the lights are out. (This procedure is briefly used to get the children's attention so that they may comfortably finish eating, have the opportunity to buy additional food, to return trays, or to be dismissed).
- Walk in the cafeteria at all times.
- Respect one another and the adults in charge.
- All students sitting at a cafeteria table are responsible for the condition/cleanliness of the table and will be reminded of this responsibility.

The administration may implement additional policies -- such as limiting the number of students at cafeteria tables or otherwise addressing students in the cafeteria -- depending upon public health considerations or other circumstances.

There is a monthly breakfast and lunch menu on the [Food & Nutrition web page](#). You can learn more regarding the cost and how to pay for your child's meal by visiting the above web page.

# CHARACTER CODE

Good conduct in our schools is synonymous with good citizenship; students are expected to behave in a manner that is conducive to a safe, respectful, and caring learning environment. To help our students be good citizens, we have developed the following set of school-wide guidelines.

	HALL	CAFETERIA	RECESS	CLASS-ROOMS	BATHROOM	BUS
<b>BE SAFE</b>	<p>Always walk.</p> <p>Walk on the right side.</p> <p>Keep hands and feet to yourself.</p>	<p>Always walk.</p> <p>Keep food and drinks off the floor.</p> <p>Stay seated when eating.</p> <p>Keep your bottom on the seat and feet on the floor under-neath the table.</p> <p>Do not throw anything.</p>	<p>Be considerate of others.</p> <p>No fighting, tackling, rough play, or play fighting.</p> <p>Use equipment safely.</p> <p>Do not leave the playground.</p>	<p>Keep your work area neat and clutter-free.</p>	<p>Use the facilities appropriately.</p> <p>Turn off the water after washing your hands.</p>	<p>Remain seated.</p> <p>Follow the bus driver's directions.</p>
	HALL	CAFETERIA	RECESS	CLASS-ROOMS	BATHROOM	BUS
<b>BE RESPECTFUL</b>	<p>Use a quiet voice.</p> <p>Pick-up trash.</p>	<p>Follow directions of adults.</p> <p>Wait in line.</p> <p>Stop talking when the lights are out.</p>	<p>Follow directions of staff.</p> <p>Respond to the whistle at once.</p>	<p>Listen and follow the teachers' directions.</p>	<p>Respect privacy.</p> <p>Report problems <u>immediately</u>.</p>	<p>Listen and be polite to the driver.</p> <p>Keep hands and feet to yourself.</p>

		Touch only your food.  No sharing of food.				
	<b>HALL</b>	<b>CAFETERIA</b>	<b>RECESS</b>	<b>CLASS-ROOMS</b>	<b>BATHROOM</b>	<b>BUS</b>
<b>BE CARING</b>	Keep hands off items displayed on the walls.	Use good table manners.  Clean your area on the table and floor.	Allow others to take turns.  Play fairly.	Take good care of your desk.  Clean it weekly.  Be careful with school equipment and supplies.	Take care of school property.	Talk normally; do not yell.

**CHARACTER EDUCATION**

The New Milford Public Schools emphasize the importance of character education. Ten character traits are taught and discussed throughout the school year: respect, responsibility, honesty, compassion, perseverance, citizenship, integrity, loyalty, courage, and cooperation. Each month we focus on a given trait and staff members help students use the language and exhibit the behavior for making good choices that show good character. Character Education assemblies are also provided for our students’ instruction and enjoyment.

Class meetings, student volunteering, student responsibilities, and community outreach projects are very important at our school because they help instill a sense of sharing and helping in our students.

The guidance counselor also gives developmental guidance lessons (following the Choose Love curriculum) that focus on important character traits, choices, and good behavior. The students really enjoy this program and we have seen many positive benefits in our school atmosphere since we started this wonderful program.

Each school has a student recognition program focused on the positive behaviors noted below.

# **CHARACTER TRAITS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR BEHAVIOR**

The chart below has the district character traits and school expectations for behavior so you can use the same language as we use at school when talking with your children about expected behavior and what the character traits look like in action.

<b>September</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>January</b>
<b>Respect</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Honesty</b>	<b>Compassion</b>	<b>Perseverance</b>
I take turns talking.  I use kind words  I keep my hands to myself.  I follow the teachers' directions.	I am in charge of what I do.  I do my assigned work at school and home.  I keep my work space clean and neat.	I tell the truth.  I ask permission before using someone else's property.	I care about other people's feelings.  I treat others with kindness.	I keep trying, especially when things are hard to do.  I take a break sometimes so I can work better.
<b>February</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>April</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>
<b>Citizenship</b>	<b>Integrity</b>	<b>Loyalty</b>	<b>Courage</b>	<b>Cooperation</b>
I take care of the school's property.  I tell an adult when I see something is wrong.	I keep my word.  I do what is right, even if no one is watching.	I am a good friend.  I speak kindly about my family, friends, and teachers.	I do what is right, even if it feels scary.  I share what I am thinking in class.  I try new ways of learning.	I get along with other people.  I work with others so we can learn together.

## **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

If there is reasonable cause to suspect that any child under age 18 has had an injury or injuries inflicted upon him/her by other than accidental means or has injuries that are at variance with the reasons given for them or is subject to maltreatment such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, cruel punishment, deprivation of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or access to

education, then according to Section 17-38a(b) of the Connecticut Statutes, school employees are required to report suspected child abuse and neglect cases to the proper authorities.

## **COMPUTERS AND INTERNET USE**

All of our students are given computer education instruction in our computer education lab and use computers in their classrooms for instructional practice and intervention, writing assignments, practicing computer skills, doing research, and participating in assessments.

Students must abide by the New Milford Public Schools Computer and Internet Responsible Use Agreement. If a student commits any violation or in any way misuses the access to the school's computer network and the Internet, access privileges may be revoked and the student may be subject to further disciplinary consequences, up to and including suspension and expulsion.

Please refer to the [Responsible Use Agreement](#) included in the return to school packet for the upcoming school year.

## **CONFERENCES**

In the fall and spring of each school year, parent-teacher conferences are scheduled using the online parent portal. Teachers or parents may also request additional conferences to discuss student progress or behavior concerns. Parents may want to consider contacting the teacher whenever a situation occurs at home which might have an impact on their children's self-esteem or ability to learn.

## **DELAYED OPENINGS / EARLY SCHOOL CLOSINGS / EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

From time to time, parents inquire about our procedures for closing schools in the event of weather problems. A delayed opening starts 2-hours later at 10:50 a.m. Early closing is 2 hours and 15 minutes earlier at 1:00 p.m. Here is a summary of what you can expect during the coming school year:



1. **How is the decision made to delay, dismiss early, or close schools?**

Decisions regarding school closings, delayed openings, and early dismissals are made by the Superintendent in consultation with the local police and highway departments, the school bus company, and area weather forecasters. The first consideration in making these decisions is student safety.

Morning decisions about delayed openings are made between 4:45 and 5:30 a.m. based on road conditions and weather forecasts available at that hour. Decisions must be made at that point because the first school buses begin their morning runs shortly after 6:00 a.m.

**School Start Times with a Delayed Opening:**

New Milford High School and Schaghticoke Middle School  
9:35 a.m.

Northville, Hill & Plain, and Sarah Noble Intermediate School  
10:50 a.m.

Decisions about early dismissal due to weather problems or other emergencies are made during the late morning and announced around **11:00 a.m.** **Afternoon EXCEL Pre-K classes are canceled when early dismissal occurs.** During weather related early dismissals, students are dismissed **two hours and 15 minutes** early.

**School Dismissal Times with an Early Dismissal:**

New Milford High School and Schaghticoke Middle School  
12:00 p.m.

Northville, Hill & Plain, and Sarah Noble Intermediate School  
1:00 p.m.

An accelerated early dismissal may be called when a storm happens unexpectedly or is anticipated to arrive between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. If this should occur, a rapid school

message will be sent out and the words “accelerated early dismissal” will be part of the message.

### **Accelerated Early Dismissal Times:**

New Milford High School and Schaghticoke Middle School  
11:00 a.m.

Northville, Hill & Plain, and Sarah Noble Intermediate School  
12:00 p.m.

On a day when an accelerated early dismissal is called, morning EXCEL students will be dismissed at 12:00 p.m. with the elementary schools.

#### **2. How are delayed openings handled?**

If early morning conditions are poor but expected to improve by sunrise, school opening times are delayed by **two hours**. **Morning EXCEL Pre-K classes are canceled when there is a delayed opening.** If the weather does not improve during the **two hour** delay period, a decision to close school for the day may be made. Parents and guardians should check the TV stations listed below until the delay period has passed in order to make sure that school will be in session.

#### **3. How do I find out if schools are closed or there is an early dismissal?**

School closings and delayed openings are announced beginning around 6:00 a.m. and early dismissals are announced around 11:00 a.m. on the following TV stations:

- WVIT-TV (Channel 6/NBC 30)
- WTNH-TV (Channel 8)
- WFSB-TV (Channel 3)

Parents are also encouraged to sign up for email and text notifications through [www.ctweather.com](http://www.ctweather.com) by selecting “e-Notifications.” There is a link to this site on the school district’s website at [www.newmilfordps.org](http://www.newmilfordps.org).

The district will also notify parents of school closings and early dismissal through a rapid notification service. This service will allow us to send a voice mail message to all parents within minutes. The ability to deliver a message is only as successful as the

contact information that we have for your child, therefore, please make certain that your child's school has the most up-to-date direct dial numbers. This information is updated annually at the beginning of the school year. If your information changes after the annual update please let your child's school know immediately. Please note there will be one call at approximately **5:45 a.m.** to delay or cancel school. In rare instances, a call will be made later if the weather conditions change.

**4. What if schools are open but my road is dangerous?**

New Milford is the largest town in Connecticut. It is quite possible for conditions on a few roads to be hazardous while conditions are good throughout the rest of the town. You should keep your child home if you believe that conditions on your particular street are unsafe. Inform the school by way of a phone call or an absence note that your child was absent due to hazardous road conditions.

**5. What if I work out of town and do not receive the early closing announcements?**

Arrangements should be made with a friend or neighbor who can hear the early closing announcements to call you or to care for your child until you arrive home.

**6. What can I do if I am concerned that my child might come home to an empty house in the event of an early closing?**

Parents and guardians should arrange with neighbors or friends to handle situations where young children might arrive home from school to find no one there. You need to make sure your children know what to do in case you may ever be delayed. Again, you can stay informed about early closing decisions by watching one of the TV stations listed, calling your child's school, or by checking the district website at [www.newmilfordps.org](http://www.newmilfordps.org).

**7. What about school activities on days when school is closed?**

After school and evening activities are canceled if school is closed or dismissed early.

**8. Why are schools sometimes closed when the weather doesn't seem to be too bad?**

Given the uncertainty of weather forecasts, conditions can change considerably between 5:45 a.m. and normal school opening time. Occasionally, a storm warning will cause us to close schools, but a few hours later the storm may turn in another direction. We would rather have the schools closed on such a day than to risk having the storm hit while we have thousands of children in the schools or on the roads.

Changes in school hours can be difficult to handle given a family's busy schedule. However, we know you will understand that safety considerations must come first and that making decisions that affect thousands of people in a large area while facing uncertain weather forecasts can be difficult. Your patience and cooperation are appreciated.

## **Delayed School Openings**

When there is a delayed opening due to inclement weather:

- Start time for Grades K–2: 10:50 a.m. Dismissal: 3:15 p.m.
- Morning EXCEL: ALL CLASSES CANCELED.
- Afternoon EXCEL hours: 12:30-3:15 p.m.
- All PPTs scheduled on a delayed opening morning will be rescheduled.

## **Emergency Closings**

School may also be unexpectedly dismissed early because of inclement or excessively hot weather, power failure, or other emergencies.

- Start time for Grades K–2: 8:50 a.m. Dismissal: 1:00 p.m.
- Morning EXCEL: 8:50 a.m.-11:35 a.m. (Hours not affected by early closing)
- Afternoon EXCEL: ALL CLASSES CANCELED.
- All PPT's scheduled on an "Emergency Closing Day" will be rescheduled.

## **DEMOGRAPHIC UPDATE**

- Each child needs a demographic update each year by parents. This can be done at the PowerSchool portal - more information can be on the [Technology webpage](#).
- Parents are asked to supply the school with names, addresses, and phone numbers of local persons who can be called in emergency situations should they not be available.
- Parents must advise the school of changes which occur in the registration information during the school year, including changes in email addresses and cell phone numbers.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Maintaining discipline within the school is an essential component of ensuring a safe environment in which students can pursue their education and access the school's activities. Students and their parents are expected to learn and abide by the district's disciplinary policies and the school's behavioral expectations.

In order to establish a positive and safe learning environment for all of the students, the following rules are in place. All staff members are responsible for establishing, explaining, and enforcing these rules; parents are responsible for teaching their children about the need for respect and cooperation; students are responsible for showing respect and exercising the self-control needed to meet our expectations for appropriate behavior. Disruptive, discourteous, and unsafe behaviors or actions that violate the rights of others will result in disciplinary action. The use of profanity will not be tolerated at any time. Consequences for disregarding school rules will be fair, appropriate, and designed to teach the child the need for following school rules and ways to make better behavioral choices in the future.

Although the school will to the extent possible seek to implement progressive discipline, incremental interventions may not be appropriate in cases in which the misconduct is sufficiently serious as to constitute a basis for suspension or expulsion under Board Policy 5114. Although this is not an all-inclusive list, examples of such behaviors include:

1. Assault/Threatening/Bullying
2. Theft/Extortion
3. Vandalism
4. Possession, use, or transmission of tobacco, drugs, or non-drug substances presented as drugs, alcohol, weapons, or explosives
5. Leaving school without permission
6. Insubordination
7. Other behaviors outlined in New Milford Board of Education Policy ([#5114](#))

In such cases -- and except for conduct for which Connecticut law and [Board Policy 5114](#) mandates expulsion -- the administration will determine the appropriate disciplinary consequence.

A complete listing of the school district's student expectations, including student conduct, is set forth in the "Series 5000 – Students" section of the New Milford Board of Education's Policies, which can be found in their entirety on the New Milford Public Schools' website at:

<https://www.newmilfordps.org/boepolicies>

## **EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

When schools close early (or even when it appears they might close early), our always-busy phone system becomes overloaded. It becomes difficult for school staff to use phone lines to call out and even more difficult for people outside the school to call in. So that urgent and emergency calls can be placed and received during storms, we ask you to help keep our lines open for such calls by doing the following:

1. Tell your children what to do any time they get home and you are unexpectedly not there. On any day, there could be circumstances that lead you to be unavoidably delayed getting home. Your children should have access to neighbors, a key, and/or a phone when they find themselves unexpectedly unsupervised. Please assure your children that it is not necessary to call home if school dismisses early, because they already know what to do when you are not there.
2. If there is a forecast of a winter storm, review with your children what you want them to do if school gets out early.
3. When sending a note stating that you plan to pick up your children on a day when a storm is forecast, please include a statement telling the school whether your children will still be picked up if school is dismissed early.
4. Watch Connecticut television (Channels 3, 6, 8, or 30) to keep informed of early dismissal information. Parents are also encouraged to sign up for email notification through [www.ctweather.com](http://www.ctweather.com) and select "e-Notifications." There is also a link on the school's district website at [www.newmilfordps.org](http://www.newmilfordps.org). The district will also notify parents of school closings and early dismissal through a rapid notification service. This service will allow us to send a voicemail and/or text message to all parents within minutes. The ability to deliver a message is only as successful as the contact information that we have for your child, therefore, please make certain that your child's school has the most up-to-date direct dial numbers. This information is updated annually at the beginning of the school year. If your information changes after the annual update please let your child's school know immediately. Please note there will be one call at approximately **5:45 a.m.** to delay or cancel school. In rare instances, a call will be made later if the weather conditions change.
5. Remember that school-sponsored after-school activities always will be canceled whenever there is an early closing. CCD will also be canceled. The Youth Agency's after school program will remain open.

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

Schools regularly conduct emergency drills to properly respond to emergency situations. There are a variety of drills for different circumstances.

- Evacuation Drill - instructs the students and staff to evacuate the building.
- Lockdown - prepares the school for lock down procedures to safeguard against dangers outside the building.
- Secure-in-Place Drill - prepares the school for possible natural disasters.

Each of these drills is discussed with the students and prepares them to respond in an orderly and appropriate manner for their safety and well-being. These drills are regularly scheduled throughout the school year and usually last only a few minutes.

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (E.L.L. SERVICES)**

All of the New Milford Public Schools provide E.L.L. services for students who speak another language as their primary language. Students are provided with extra support to help them acquire English language skills. Each year, these students are administered an assessment which tracks their progress in the English language and helps in the planning of English language services that are needed by each child.

## **E.X.C.E.L.**

The primary goal of the Experiential Center for Early Learning (EXCEL) program is to prepare pre-school children with special needs for the least restrictive public-school setting. Active involvement of the parents is encouraged. This is an integration program; therefore, the program also admits regular education students. These students are selected by a lottery and attend for a monthly tuition fee. The Director of Student Affairs (860-354-2654) should be contacted for more information or referrals to this program.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Classes may take a field trip during the course of the school year. Field trips to various points of interest are taken to enrich the child's learning experiences. Parents are required to sign a permission slip before their child can leave the school grounds. The permission slip will indicate the date, time, cost, and destination of the field trip. Children who fail to return a signed permission slip will not be allowed to accompany their class on the field trip. These students remain at school in another classroom until their class returns from their field trip/or the end of the school day. District policy prohibits students being transported in private vehicles.

The cost of the field trip should be paid by a check made out to your child's school. If a check for the field trip has to be returned to a parent for "insufficient funds," an additional fee will be charged to the parent. If a parent issues the school a check with "insufficient funds," we can only accept certified checks and money orders for all future field trips. No child is ever denied access to a field trip because of lack of funds. The PTO very generously donates money towards our school field trips and quietly sponsors anyone in need. Parents may contact a member of the faculty or administration to request assistance.

Please be aware that the school is not responsible for any lost belongings or damage to student clothing because of wearing name tags or participating in field trip activities. Therefore, it is very important that students wear comfortable and appropriate clothing on these outings.

All field trip chaperones must be fingerprinted according to the district's [Board of Education Policy #1212](#). Due to laws regarding student privacy, photographs taken by parents during class activities at school or field trips **cannot** be posted on social network sites. Please refer to [Board Policy # 6141.324](#).

## **FOOD SERVICE**

### **MySchoolBucks Program**

New Milford's Food and Nutrition Services Department provides parents with a convenient, easy, and secure online prepayment service to deposit money into their children's school meal accounts at any time. This service also provides you with the ability to view the account balances through their web site [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com). In addition, you can print out a copy of your children's eating history reports. The history report lists dates and times of all food purchased within the past thirty days.



When parents choose not to take advantage of the online pre-payment service, advance payments via cash or check are made to the cafeteria. Checks are payable to the School Lunch Activity Fund and should include your child's full name and PIN.

If your child qualifies for free or reduced priced meals, this information is noted in the system and the meal is processed just as it is for all other students without any special indication to the student. Applications for free or reduced priced meals will be sent home with students in the fall and are also available in the school office.

If you are concerned about your child's food allergy, please notify the cafeteria with this information. If indicated, a warning will appear on the cashier's screen for a review of the items on your child's tray.

When purchasing a meal, students enter their person six-digit personal identification number (PIN).

Please feel free to contact the Food Services office at 860-354-3712 if you have any questions.

## **Breakfast**

A breakfast program is available to all students who attend our schools. **Breakfast begins at 8:25 a.m.** Classes begin at 8:50 a.m.

## **Lunch**

Monthly menus are listed in the newspaper and on the [Food & Nutrition New Milford Public Schools website](#). Students have the option daily of choosing the traditional hot lunch or one of three other choices. The additional choices are 1) sandwich of the week (choice will change weekly); 2) bagel, yogurt, and string cheese; 3) chef's salad (this replaces the salad bar). Accompanying these lunches will be fresh or canned fruit, 100% fruit juice, or fresh vegetables. Students may choose two (2) of these with their lunch.

## **FOOTWEAR**

It is important that your child wears safe footwear at all times. Safe footwear does not leave toes exposed and ensures proper balance while walking, preventing unnecessary injury, especially during physical education classes, on the playground, and during emergency drills.

## **GUIDANCE SERVICES**

The guidance counselor helps to coordinate school services and resources to provide a successful school environment for the children. The counselor is available to all students who may need help with problems that interfere with their learning. The counselor also gives classroom developmental guidance lessons (following the Choose Love program) that focus on important character traits, choices, and good behavior.

## **HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

Lunch and snacks, including beverages brought from home, should be nutritious. Nutrient-dense foods are those that provide students with calories rich in the nutrient content needed to be healthy and include whole grains, fresh fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

The school nurse is on duty when school is in session. He/she will assess any child who becomes ill or injured during the school day; administer first aid treatment defined by the medical advisor's standing orders; administer medications; conduct vision, hearing, and scoliosis screenings; monitor incoming physical examinations and immunizations; and will be available for other health related issues. The nurse can be reached by calling the main school number.

### **1. What if a child becomes sick or injured at school?**

The school nurse will assess the illness or injury. If it is necessary to send the child home, the parent will be contacted to come to school for the child. If the parent is unable to come to school, it is the parent's responsibility to arrange some other means of transportation. The school does not accept the responsibility of providing transportation for further treatment. For this reason, it is important to have back-up plans in place for the school year. If an illness or accident is an emergency, the nurse will contact the

child's primary physician (or the school medical advisor) as well as the parent. Ambulance transportation will be activated if deemed necessary.

**2. When my child is sick, how should I decide whether or not to keep him/her home from school?**

Sometimes it can be hard to decide whether to keep a child home from school. If children are vomiting or have a fever, diarrhea, rash or other skin eruption, sore throat with fever/rash, earache, conjunctivitis, or other acute illness (e.g., severe cold symptoms, persistent cough, etc.) it would be best to keep them home. Children should be symptom-free for 24 hours or cleared by their doctor before returning to school.

**3. What if my child needs to be given medications at school?**

Connecticut state law requires a physician's written order and the authorization of the parent/ guardian for the school nurse to administer any oral medication. The medication is to be delivered directly to the school nurse by the parent/guardian or other responsible adult. The medication must be properly labeled indicating the child's name, type of medication, dosage, and the physician's name. Students are not allowed to bring medication to school.

**4. What is the school's procedure for administering medication?**

The New Milford Board of Education policy for the administration of medication specifies that school nurses, teachers, and properly trained para-professionals (under certain emergency conditions) may administer medications during school hours under the following guidelines:

- a. The school must receive the **written consent of the parent and the written order of the prescribing doctor to administer medication.**
- b. The **medication** must be **brought to school and taken home by a parent/or responsible adult.** Any medication not taken home will be disposed of by the nurse after one week.
- c. The medication container **must be labeled with the name of the student, name of the doctor, name of the medication, the date(s) it is ordered, and the directions.**

The proper consent and order forms are available in the health office and our local doctors have been supplied with them as well. A telephone call from you or your doctor will not suffice. Your cooperation in this policy will be of great assistance in ensuring your child receives the medical assistance needed while maintaining a safe environment for the entire student body.

Neither the New Milford Board of Education nor any of its personnel, including but not limited to school nurses, is responsible for ensuring that the medication, or its recommended dosage, prescribed by a physician or other medical professional and/or provided by the parents or guardians, is appropriate for the student.

## 5. What health screenings are provided?

Vision and hearing screenings are provided as mandated by the State of Connecticut. Both vision and hearing screenings are done in the fall for students in grades K-1. If your child scores below the mandated criteria in any of the screenings, a referral notice will be mailed to you urging you to seek professional attention as soon as possible. The form should be completed by the examining physician and returned to the health office.

### Required Physical Examinations:

**Pre-school students** must submit the following documentation to the nurse for review before entering:

- Physical exam done within the year prior to the opening day of school. This includes height, weight, blood pressure, hemoglobin, urine, TB, gross dental, and postural.
- Immunizations updated for the following doses:
  - a. DTaP: 4 doses (by 18 months for programs with children 18 months of age)
  - b. Polio: 3 doses (by 18 months for programs with children 18 months of age)
  - c. MMR: 1 dose on or after 1st birthday
  - d. Hep B: 3 doses, last one on or after 24 weeks of age
  - e. Varicella: 1 dose on or after 1st birthday or verification of disease
  - f. Hib: 1 dose on or after 1st birthday
  - g. Pneumococcal: 1 dose on or after 1st birthday
  - h. Influenza: 1 dose administered each year between August 1st-December 31st (2 doses separated by at least 28 days required for those receiving flu for the first time)
  - i. Hepatitis A: 2 doses given six calendar months apart, 1st dose on or after 1st birthday

**Kindergarten students** must submit the following documentation to the nurse for review before entering:

- Physical exam done within the year prior to the opening day of school. This includes height, weight, blood pressure, hemoglobin, urine, TB, gross dental, and postural.
- Immunizations updated for the following doses:
  - a. DTaP: At least 4 doses. The last dose must be given on or after 4th birthday
  - b. Polio: At least 3 doses. The last dose must be given on or after 4th birthday
  - c. MMR: 2 doses separated by at least 28 days, 1st dose on or after 1st birthday
  - d. Hep B: 3 doses, last dose on or after 24 weeks of age
  - e. Varicella: 2 doses separated by at least 3 months-1st dose on or after 1st birthday; or verification of disease
  - f. Hib: 1 dose on or after 1st birthday for children less than 5 years old
  - g. Pneumococcal: 1 dose on or after 1st birthday for children less than 5 years old
  - h. Hepatitis A: 2 doses given six calendar months apart, 1st dose on or after 1st birthday

### **Grades 1 – 2**

Before new students begin school in grades 1 or 2, the nurse must receive documentation of completed kindergarten physical and updated immunizations as stated above for kindergarten.

School physicals may be available for students receiving free or reduced lunch assistance. A written request from the parent is required. Please contact the school nurse if you think your child is eligible.

## **COVID-19**

Given the unprecedented nature of the current COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty as to its prevalence or effect at the outset of or during the school year – and in accordance with possible directives or guidance issued by an agency of the United States government, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the State of Connecticut, and/or the New Milford Department of Health – the New Milford Board of Education may be issuing supplemental information regarding measures and expectations pertaining to student and staff health.

## **HOMEWORK**

The purpose of homework is to strengthen class work and to broaden a student's background and competency in a specific course area or basic skill. Reasonable and well-planned homework assignments can contribute significantly to a student's school progress. The type of homework and the length of the assignment will be reflective of the child's age and attention span. Every child is expected to read or be read to for at least fifteen (15) minutes every day depending on his/her age and grade level. This is in addition to any other homework assignments.

Research has shown that the most important educational gift that a parent can give to his or her child is the gift of the love of reading. Please read to your child and encourage your child to read everyday. It is such an important skill!

## **Absences and Homework**

A student with an illness of brief duration should obtain assignments from another student, or wait until the next school day when the student returns to obtain assignments. If a student is ill for at least three consecutive days, parents should request the homework assignments from the teacher, and the work will be available for pick-up the following school day.

Absences from school for vacations, trips, or appointments outside of school detract from a student's learning. Please cooperate by scheduling family vacations during the summer or during school vacations. Please note that if your child is going to be absent from school for these reasons, it is not incumbent on the teacher to provide your child with the work that will be missed during such an absence. The instruction that your child would have received directly from the teacher during the absence cannot be easily replaced, and your child should make specific arrangements upon return to complete the missed work.

## **HOME TUTORING**

Parents of students who are absent for an extended period of time because of illness may request home instruction upon completion and acceptance of the medical questionnaire. All parent requests for home instruction will be directed to administration and will be provided for medical reasons that mean the state and federal mandates for such services. Once instruction has been approved, a teacher will report up to ten hours a week. All instruction will take place at the public library. Notwithstanding the foregoing, circumstances may sometimes require that instruction be provided remotely or virtually, which will be at the discretion of the school administration. If it is determined that instruction needs to take place in the home, an adult person must be present in the home during the instruction period. Any questions or problems should be directed to administration.

## **INSURANCE**

Parents will have the opportunity to participate in a school insurance program approved by the New Milford Board of Education. These forms, with an explanation, are distributed to the children in the fall for your review. Participation is voluntary.

## **LIBRARY BOOKS AND TEXTBOOKS**

All library books and textbooks are the property of the New Milford Board of Education. Textbooks are loaned to the students and will be collected when completed or at the end of the school year. All classrooms have a small supply of library books in addition to our main library collection. Students will have the opportunity and will be encouraged to borrow books on a regular basis.

Children are responsible for their textbooks and library books. They must be returned in good condition. Parents will be required to pay for any books that are lost or damaged.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Children and parents can look for lost personal articles in the school's lost and found section. Special items such as glasses, watches, and wallets with money may be located in the office. Placing your child's name on outer garments will help to identify misplaced items. The school is not responsible for any lost or broken items. Electronics, expensive toys, and valuable items should not be brought to school; they are distracting to the learning environment and can be lost or broken. All unclaimed items will be discarded in December and June of each school year.

## **NEWSPAPER/MEDIA INFORMATION**

Throughout the course of the school year, there will be many opportunities for newspaper photographs to be taken of the students at our schools. If you **do not wish** to have your child/children photographed, you need to notify your child's teacher and the office each new school year and sign the media denial form sent home for this purpose.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT**

### **STATEMENT OF POLICY:**

All of the school district's programs and activities are offered without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, disability or, any other basis prohibited by law, and it is the policy of the Board to prohibit conduct and behavior by any employee, agent, volunteer, student, or third party in the New Milford school system that may be deemed to be unlawful discrimination, including but not limited to harassment. Students will exhibit conduct that is respectful and courteous to employees, to fellow students, and to the public. Any person found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion from school for students or dismissal for school personnel.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment is prohibited by both federal and Connecticut law, as well as by Board Policy. Sexual harassment does not only depend upon the offender's intention, but also upon how the recipient of it perceives the behavior or is affected by it. Sexual harassment can originate from a person of either sex against a person of the opposite or same sex and from peers as well as adults. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, or any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature including, but not limited to:

- insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct;
- threats or suggestions that a student's submission to, or rejection of, unwelcome conduct will in any way influence a decision regarding the student;
- conduct of a sexual nature that substantially interferes with the student's learning or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment, including but not necessarily limited to: sexual name calling, display of unwanted affections, inappropriate gestures, inappropriate jokes/cartoons/pictures, inappropriate touching, sexual rumors, overly personal conversations, harassing telephone calls.

### **OTHER HARASSMENT**

Federal and/or state law also prohibits harassment that is based upon or motivated by a student's race, color, religion, natural origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ancestry, disability or mental status. See Board Policy #[5145.7](#) (Statement in



Relation to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973).

Title IX protects students from gender-based discrimination, including harassment. Similarly, Title VI protects students from discrimination, including harassment, based upon race, color, or national origin. Section 504 protects students from discrimination, including harassment, that is based upon the student's actual or perceived disability. Connecticut law also protects students against discrimination that is based upon the student's race, color, religion, natural origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ancestry, disability or mental status.

**Guidelines for harassment are very simple. No person may do or say anything that causes another person to feel uncomfortable or threatened in a place where he or she must go: school, work, church, the corner store. People have a right to go to these places without fear of being in an uncomfortable, or worse, a threatening situation.**

If a student feels he or she is being discriminated against or harassed, the student should:

- first, request that the other person stop;
- then, if the other person does not stop request assistance from an adult staff member in the immediate area;
- lastly, if it continues, the student should immediately request help from his/her school counselor and administrator.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

Discriminatory or harassing conduct is not and shall not be permitted and may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion from school for students or discharge for staff members.

Please Note: Board Policies 5145.5 and 5145.7 (regulation) set forth the Board's procedures for reporting, investigating, and resolving claims of unlawful harassment.

For questions or complaints regarding the district's policy of non-discrimination, please contact the Title IX/Section 504 Coordinators:

Section 504 & Title IX Coordinator for Students

Ms. Holly Hollander, Assistant Superintendent

Title IX Coordinator for Staff

Mrs. Teresa Kavanagh, Director of HR

New Milford Board of Education  
25 Sunny Valley Rd Suite A  
New Milford, CT 06776  
860-354-3235

New Milford Board of Education  
25 Sunny Valley Rd Suite A  
New Milford, CT 06776  
860-210-2200

## **PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)**

Each year the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) offers parents the opportunity to become a member of this helpful organization. The PTO works to enrich the educational experience of the children in our school. The PTO generously provides cultural and educational events for our students, including puppet shows, storytellers, visiting artists and writers, theater groups, and science programs and pays for them with the money earned from various fundraisers throughout the year.

The Parent-Teacher Organization has general meetings throughout the year. All parents are invited to attend these meetings. If any parent needs to get in touch with a PTO representative, please contact the school office for a phone number.

## **PEER CONFLICT**

Conflict is a normal part of healthy relationships occurring when children attempt to manage situations and navigate their world. Conflict resolution is an important life skill and we encourage students to build self-advocacy skills. We teach children strategies to help them solve problems on their own. Teachers and support staff model feelings and use “I Messages” (see below) with students. Students engage in discourse during read aloud and participate in role-playing opportunities. They also learn about the difference between reporting and tattling.

*I Message:*

*“Please stop that. I don’t like it when you \_\_\_\_\_. It makes me feel \_\_\_\_\_.”*

We like to ensure our students have the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions and demonstrate remorse which is key in the development of empathy. We encourage parents to spend time together with their children to talk about school and peer relationships. We also encourage your child to use “I Messages” when conflicts arise at home or in the community as well as in school.

## **PHOTOGRAPHING STUDENTS**

Due to laws regarding student privacy, photographs taken by parents during class activities at school or field trips **cannot** be posted on social network sites. Please refer to [Board Policy #6141.324](#).

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

The school provides psychological services to children who are experiencing academic and/or adjustment difficulties. When deemed appropriate by a Planning and Placement Team or a Section 504 Team, the psychologist can provide a thorough evaluation utilizing instruments designed to measure achievement, potential for learning, and emotional adjustment. Parental permission is necessary for this evaluation and consultation is provided. The school psychologist can also provide counseling for students and consultation for parents regarding child development and parenting skills.

## **RECESS**

Children are expected to play outdoors during their supervised recess period during reasonable, fair weather conditions. Your child should be properly dressed for the season and weather. Footwear is very important to protect children's feet from wetness and cold temperatures. In the winter, children should wear snow pants, warm jackets, mittens, and boots to play outside during recess. If your child has been ill and your doctor requests that he/she stay indoors, a note should be sent to that effect.

During recess, children will be required to follow safety rules. For security reasons, parents are not permitted on the playground during recess. When the weather is inclement, recess is conducted inside where space is restricted, and the children must practice responsible behavior in sharing space and materials.

## **REGISTRATION**

A registration form is filled out by the parent of each child at the beginning of the school year and it is kept in the school file. It is extremely important to supply the school with names, addresses, and phone numbers of people who can be called in an emergency when parents are

not available. **Any change of home address, telephone number or emergency names and numbers must be reported to the school office immediately.**

New kindergarten children must be five (5) years of age on or before December 31 of the school year in which they are enrolling. Kindergarten registration is held each spring for those children who will be attending school the following August.

## **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are issued three times a year in December, March, and June for students in grades K-2. They are a means to report academic progress. Progress indicators on the report card are the result of a variety of classroom activities. Often a child's program is modified so that he or she may master a skill more easily. Questions regarding a child's achievement should be addressed directly to the teacher who has done the grading.

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

**The school hours for K-2 students are 8:50 a.m.-3:15 p.m.** Student supervision begins at 8:25 a.m. at each school. For you children's safety, please do not drop off your children before the time noted above unless they are participating in a school-sponsored activity.

**Morning EXCEL school hours are 8:50 a.m.-11:35 a.m.**

**Afternoon EXCEL school hours are 12:30 p.m.-3:15 p.m.**

**The school office is open from 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. when school is in session. If school is dismissed early or canceled, all after-school activities and meetings are canceled.**

## **MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)**

A standards-based core curriculum implemented with research-based teaching and learning practices (e.g., communicating the learning objective, modeling, guided practice, flexible grouping, formative assessment, explicit feedback, choice) ensures grade level proficiency for most students; however, some students struggle with this approach. Multi-Tiered System of Supports or MTSS is New Milford's version of Response to Intervention (RtI). It is both an educational process and a systematic approach for addressing the needs of low-performing learners who have not been identified as needing special education. It is mandated by federal

law, and its primary purposes are to determine the possible presence of learning disabilities and to help all students achieve grade level proficiency.

Schools create and implement general education strategies and interventions and various layers, or “tiers” of student support in an attempt to help students achieve standards. These interventions use assessment data to identify important learning needs. Then, educators develop related intervention plans. Teachers and support personnel use these intervention plans in the general education classroom with individual students, with flexible small groups, and in support programs. The SRBI process uses assessment data to identify students when data suggest that these students may be performing below grade level expectations. The SRBI process also allows educators to identify high priority learning objectives, design related interventions, and monitor student progress toward proficiency. While language arts and mathematics are the primary foci for this initiative, we also incorporate behavioral interventions in our work.

## **SEXUAL ABUSE AND ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PROGRAM**

The K-12 Health curriculum includes state-mandated lessons regarding sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention. Upon the written request of a parent or guardian, a student shall be exempt from participating in the sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program in its entirety or from any portion specified by the parent or guardian. During the period in which the student would otherwise be participating in the program, the student will be provided with an opportunity for other study or academic work. No academic sanction would be levied against any student who is provided with this alternative.

## **SILENT READING AT HOME**

New Milford Public Schools (NMPS) is committed to developing a culture of competent readers. Reading like other skills need to be practiced regularly. Based on evidence which suggests that volume of reading is linked to attaining higher-order literacy proficiencies (Allington, 2012; Brozo et al, 2008, Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992). Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) researched the relationship between the amount of reading done and reading achievement. They found that the amount of time reading was the best predictor of reading achievement, including a child’s growth as a reader from the second to the fifth grade. (Calkins, Research Base Underlying the Teachers College Reading and Writing Workshop Approach to Literacy Instruction). Being committed to promoting a culture of readers, NMPS subscribes to the following parameters:

Grade	Reading Time
K	1 Picture Book Read Aloud or Read Independently
1	10-15 minutes
2	20 minutes nightly
3	20 minutes nightly
4	30 minutes nightly
5	30 minutes nightly
6-12	45 minutes or more nightly

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

Provision for children with special needs is part of the total school program in the New Milford Public Schools. Eligibility for, and the nature of, special education and related services are determined in accordance with both federal and Connecticut law by a Planning and Placement Team ["PPT"].

## **STUDENT PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF PROCEDURES**

We realize that you might need to drop-off or pick-up your child at parent pick-up on certain days; however, **we strongly encourage you to let your child ride the bus as much as possible.** Parking is very limited and students have the opportunity to gain many valuable social skills while riding the bus. Student supervision begins at 8:30 a.m. in each K-2 school. For your children's safety, please do not drop-off your children before this time unless they are participating in a school-sponsored activity.

Parents are not permitted to accompany their children to their classrooms upon arrival. This includes students who are tardy to school. This protocol is established for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to, fostering student independence, school safety, and maintaining the integrity of instructional time.

If your child is being picked up at school, please notify the teacher with a signed note, which specifies who is picking up the child. It is also important for parents to inform their children of any changes in their daily transportation routine because children often get confused when plans are changed. Please refrain from calling the school office with changes in daily transportation plans unless it is a true emergency. This creates great confusion for both your child and the school.

Adults are required to show photo identification when picking up a child at school. Students will not be dismissed from the office after 3 p.m. These important security procedures help to insure your child's safety at school during this very busy time of day in the office.

**IMPORTANT: If we do not have a note from a parent, your child will be sent home on his/her regular bus.**

The school has long documented children who are absent or who come to school late. We now document on the report cards early dismissals in the same way. It is important for us to recognize and record the amounts of time students are not available to participate in the school program.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Guidelines for the Use of Personal Technology on Campus**

Technology has changed the way we approach education as we prepare our students for future opportunities. We understand the many positive educational benefits of using technology in the classroom and the importance of the integration of technology in our curriculum. In an effort to encourage our students and continue to develop their technology skills, students in the New Milford Public Schools may use their own technology at school for educational purposes.

### **Definition of Personal Technology**

For purposes of this policy “personal technology” means a privately owned, wireless, and portable electronic hand-held equipment that includes, but is not limited to, existing and emerging mobile communication systems and smart technologies, portable internet devices. Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), hand held entertainment systems or portable information technology systems that can be used for word processing, wireless Internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording and information transmitting/receiving/storing, etc.

## **Use of Technology for Instructional Purposes**

Use of technology in school is a privilege that comes with great responsibility. Students will only be allowed to use their laptops, tablets, cell phones or other electronic devices for educational purposes at school. Checking personal email, socializing via texts or instant messages, or otherwise engaging in personal pursuits is prohibited during the instructional day.

## **Internet Access on School Grounds**

Only the internet gateway provided by the school may be accessed while on campus. Personal technology, including cell phones and cell network adapters are not permitted to be used to access outside internet sources at any time.

## **Compliance with other Board Policies**

When participating in B.Y.O.D., students must adhere to the Student Code of Conduct, as well as all Board Policies, particularly the New Milford School District’s Responsible Use Policy. This means that students who use their personal technology at school must abide by the established policies regarding acceptable user of the Internet, bullying, harassment, cheating, threats, student confidentiality, and other misconduct that violates school rules or causes a disruption of educational activities.

## **Additional Guidelines**

- Teachers have the discretion to determine when students may use personal technology in the classroom. Students must immediately comply with their teachers’ request to shut down or put away personal technology.
- All personal technology must be in silent mode.
- Students may not use personal technology during any assessments or tests unless otherwise directed by school personnel.
- Students shall not transmit post or otherwise publicly share photographs or videos that they have taken of any person on school grounds or in a school vehicle.



## **Security and Damage**

Responsibility to keep a student's personal technology secure rests with the individual owner. New Milford School District, including its staff or employees, is not liable for any device stolen or damaged on campus. If a device is stolen or damaged, it will be handled through the administrative office in a manner similar to other personal property. It is recommended that students personalize their devices for easy identification and utilize protective cases.

The New Milford District Technology Department will not service any non-district owned technology, which includes troubleshooting, software or hardware issues. Students are responsible for securing their devices and making sure that they have up-to-date anti-virus software installed, if applicable.

## **Failure to Follow B.Y.O.D. Guidelines**

Misuse of personal technology in violation of these guidelines may result in the loss of access privileges, a prohibition on the use or possession of personal technology on school grounds, or other disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension and expulsion. We would prefer that students NOT bring electronic items to school, unless otherwise specified by their teachers.

## **Laptops/Tablets**

The use of personal laptops/tablets by a student is permitted at the teacher's discretion. Further, the school does supply students with computer lab facilities, which are utilized for research and instruction. A student has access to technology through those facilities under the supervision and direction of school staff. **Students are required to read and sign a usage policy outlining the guidelines and restrictions to be followed for appropriate use of the computers.**

## **Laser Pointers**

In accordance with state law, possession of laser pointers by minors on school grounds or other public places is prohibited unless being used under the direction of a teacher. Shining, pointing, or focusing a laser pointer directly or indirectly at or on anyone for the purpose of harassing, annoying, or causing a person to fear injury is prohibited. Infractions are punishable by fines set by a judge of the Superior Court.

## **TITLE IX**

As noted in the Non-Discrimination/Harassment section of this handbook, the New Milford Public Schools are committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons and does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, religion, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal non-discrimination laws. Inquiries regarding the school district's non-discrimination policies, including those pertaining to Title IX, Title VI, and/or Section 504 for students should be directed to Ms. Holly Hollander, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, 25 Sunny Valley Rd Suite A, New Milford, CT 06776, 860-354-3235. The Title IX Coordinator for staff is Mrs. Teresa Kavanagh, Director of Human Resources 860-210-2200.

## **TOYS AT SCHOOL**

**Toys at School** – Very often children want to bring special toys or electronic equipment to school. We understand the excitement and enthusiasm of wanting to share something new or special; however, many times a new item ends up lost or broken after a school bus ride and day at school. Expensive or valuable items are best enjoyed at home.

The staff may place other restrictions on personal items being brought to school when, in their judgment, the use of these items is inappropriate or distracting for some or all of the children in the school.

## **VISITORS**

**All visitors must check in at the office.** For the safety of both the students and staff members, a security system is in place in each of the New Milford Public Schools. The outside doors are locked during school hours. All visitors must ring the buzzer located at the main school entrance and provide their name and purpose of their visit before they may enter the building and proceed to the main office. Using our RaptorWare System, visitors will be asked to submit their driver's license to be used to create a personalized Visitor's Badge. This badge will be handed in to the main office before exiting the building. All visitors must display a visitor's badge at all times. Visitors not wearing this identification will be directed back to the office to obtain one.

Please be aware that visitors cannot use the driveway in front of the school building during bus arrival and dismissal times. **Please note: It is against the law to pass a school bus that has activated its flashing red lights. Visitors who pass any school bus during bus arrival or dismissal times will be reported to the police and may be required to pay a fine. Parents must use the area designated for student pick-up and drop-off.**

Due to safety concerns, parents and visitors are not permitted on the playground during school hours. Since our school is such large building, it is impossible for all of our staff members to know every parent and visitor.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to volunteer in their children's classrooms or school. In addition, parents who have younger children at home or who work during the school day may also work on projects at home to help the school. Teachers will contact parents directly when assistance is needed. The PTO may call when a larger project or school-wide event is undertaken. We sincerely appreciate any assistance you can provide.

**Please note: All volunteers and mentors must be fingerprinted according to [Board of Education Policy #1212](#).**

**More information may be found on Page 31 of this handbook.**

## **W.I.N. (WHAT I NEED)**

K-2 teachers have scheduled WIN times (blocks) for targeted reteaching and enrichment activities in reading and math. WIN blocks are separate from the daily instructional time. During WIN time, all new instruction stops; this is a time to reinforce or extend skills that have already been taught. Students are grouped by instructional need as indicated by assessments, report cards, and teacher observation. Intervention or enrichment instruction may be provided by a student's classroom teacher or by other staff members such as another teacher at the grade level, a reading specialist, paraeducator, music teacher, tutor, or Special Education teacher.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT!**

**BY WORKING TOGETHER, WE TRULY CAN MAKE A POSITIVE**

**DIFFERENCE IN OUR SCHOOLS!**

[Volunteer Information Pages from HR](#)

[District Calendar Page](#)