



THE VILLAGE BLUEBIRD

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2011

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SUMMER GREETINGS!

Dear Village School Families,

We hope you are enjoying the remaining days of summer and looking forward to the new school year as much as we are. The Village School team is excited to welcome back our new third and fourth graders and look forward to an exciting and productive year of learning experiences. Everyone is invited to meet our teachers and tour the building during the **Open House on Wednesday, September 7, 2011**. Please see the schedule below.

During the summer months, many teachers participated in collaborative groups to develop and update our curriculum while others participated in a Responsive Classroom workshop to support the development of strong classroom communities as well as students' academic, social and emotional growth. Our team is ready to incorporate new learning into their repertoire of assessment, teaching and learning strategies.

The new Montgomery Elementary School PTA will be led by co-presidents, Mrs. Christine Petrane and Mrs. Christine Zoffinger-Guidette. They and their team of volunteers have a host of events scheduled for the school year and invite you to get involved. For more information, please review the letter sent with the class lists and materials that will be sent home during the first days of school.

On opening day, PTA volunteers will also

help students to their classrooms in the morning and to their buses during dismissal. A special thanks to the PTA for kindly providing color coded maps and balloons that will help students find their hallways with ease during the first few days of school!

Village School continues to take great pride in building character and will highlight a different pillar of character each month. We will begin the school year by celebrating *responsibility!* To further develop these pillars, fourth graders may choose to volunteer as Peer Partners. Peer Partners model the pillars of character at all times and facilitate school-wide service projects under the guidance of Ms. Ciosek, Ms. Lucas and Mrs. Pignataro. Students perform these tasks during their recess time working a few days each month. Our pillars of character will also be highlighted during classroom discussions and through Character Education "Thoughts of the Day" scripted by third grade teacher, Mrs. Kenney. These guiding statements are presented on our live daily broadcast of the acclaimed VES News, managed by technology teacher, Mr. Dolan and hosted by fourth grade volunteers.

Look for our next issue in October! We can't wait to see all of you!

Ms. Susan Lacy, Principal

Mr. Alfred Hadinger, Vice Principal

Class Lists Are in the Mail!

Your child's class list and teacher welcome letter with supply list information were mailed home on Friday, August 26th along with the MES PTA information flyer. General and individual teacher supply lists can also be found by clicking on the link on our VES homepage or by visiting www.mtsd.k12.nj.us/supply. Our new VES Parent Handbook will also be available this fall on the VES homepage and will provide a comprehensive overview of school information and procedures.

OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE

Wednesday, September 7, 2011

3rd Grade
8:30-9:30 a.m.

4th Grade
10:00-11:00 a.m.

Back-to-School and Parent Book Fair Nights

3rd Grade - Tuesday, September 20th, 7 p.m.
4th Grade - Wednesday, September 21st, 7 p.m.
Related Arts/Community Fair begins at 6:30

This night is for parents/guardians only. We invite you to learn about VES programs and attend an important presentation by the classroom teacher. Be sure to visit the media center for the Scholastic Book Fair!

IMPORTANT DATES:

- September 7: Open House (Schedule appears below.) School Stuff Sale!
- Sept. 8: First Day of School
- Sept. 19-26: Scholastic Book Fair
- Sept. 19-20: School Picture Days
- Sept. 20: 3rd Grade Back to School Night & Book Fair Parent Night 7:00
- Sept. 21: PTA meeting 10:00 (OHES), 4th Grade Back to School Night & Book Fair Parent Night 7:00
- Sept. 23: PTA Welcome Breakfast 10:00 (OHES)
- Sept. 29: Rosh Hashanah, Schools Closed
- Oct. 1: MES PTA Kickoff Party 7:00pm (See PTA flyer for details)
- Oct. 3-7: Red Ribbon Week of Respect
- Oct. 10: Staff Development, Schools closed
- Oct. 11-14: Food Allergy Awareness Week
- Oct. 19: PTA meeting 10:00 (VES)
- Oct. 21: 4th Grade Bingo 4-5
- Oct. 28 3rd Grade Bingo 4-5
- Oct. 31: Halloween Readers' Theater & Parties
- Nov 4: Dad's Night Out
- Nov. 4, 7, 8, 9: Parent Teacher Conferences, 1:30 Early Dismissal
- Nov. 10-11: NJEA Convention, Schools Closed
- Nov. 16: PTA Meeting 10:00 (OHES)
- Nov. 18: Family Fun Night 6:00 (OHES)
- Nov. 23: 1:30 Early Dismissal
- Nov. 24-25: Thanksgiving, Schools Closed

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Our pillar of character for September is *Responsibility!*
Demonstrate it in all that you do!

Changes in Our Village School Family!



- Ms. BJ Meurer, former third grade teacher, is our new K-4 Math/Science Supervisor and will be based here at VES. Mrs. Kari McGann will continue as our K-4 Language Arts/Social Studies Supervisor based at OHES.
- Ms. Ava Laera will be the new OHES/VES shared guidance counselor. She will support the efforts of Mrs. Fornal at VES and Mrs. Senatra at OHES.
- Mrs. Amy Wish, Mrs. Amanda Yuhasz, Mrs. Kate Dunham, Ms. Amanda Steele will join our Academic Support team which includes Mrs. Hvizdos and Ms. McMullen.
- Mrs. Odenis Goris returns to VES from LMS to be the third grade world language teacher and Mrs. Gloria Stuart will return to the world language team at OHES.
- Dr. Laura Bell will transition from OHES and serve as our general music teacher.
- Ms. Kelly Messick will serve as the leave replacement for Ms. Tammy Tanzola
- Ms. Meghan Foster, school psychologist, will transition to VES from OHES with our rising third graders, replacing Mrs. Miriam Gordon who will join the OHES Child Study Team.
- Mrs. Teresa Gaudiesus and Mrs. Deborah Van Arnum, will be joining Ms. Smith on our Educational Support Assistant team.
- Mrs. Wendy Lazarus from OHES will join our Teaching Instructional Aide team.
- Ms. Diana Evans from the OHES and UMS speech departments will join the OHES/VES speech team.
- Mrs. Janis Woodard will be returning as a full time registered nurse and will continue to work with Mrs. McGuirk in the health office.



Village School is a training ground for college students as well as teachers in other districts who come to observe and learn from our exemplary programs and teaching models. During the fall semester we will have student teachers whose field experiences require their active involvement in school related and instructional activities. From The College of New Jersey, we welcome Miss Hover, Miss Smolen, and Miss Yates who will work in third grade classes and Mr. Roberto who will work with 3rd and 4th grade Health/PE classes in the spring.

Construction Update

Summer visitors to our Village School website might have noticed photos of all of the work that has been taking place in and around VES. We are pleased to report that the HVAC upgrades in the 100 Wing are virtually complete except for a bit of trim and a few shelves. We now have a modern and efficient heating and cooling system throughout our entire school.

Externally, work is concluding on driveway, sidewalk and parking lot improvements. We now have a Visitors Only parking lot in front of VES with direct access to Main Boulevard. This lot is for visitors who need to conduct business during the day or sign their children in at the office after 9:30 or out before 3:45. All of our old, crumbling sidewalks have been replaced.

The main entrance driveway has been relocated east and made safer. Our side parking lot has been expanded while the front driveway has been lengthened and changed to a bus lane only driveway. Parking is no longer permitted in the bus driveway.

We have a huge new 175 space parking lot in the back of VES that will provide paved parking for parent pick-up and evening school events. A few finishing touches, including lighting, should be finished in early September.

These improvements will make Village School even more functional and welcoming. We especially want to recognize our school and district custodial staff for their Herculean effort in getting our schools clean and safe by opening day amidst the construction beehive.

Thank You!

Special thanks to our dedicated, hardworking office staff, our custodial team led by Mr. Ken Vaccaro, our district's building and grounds crew as well as our architects and construction teams for diligently and tirelessly attending to all the important building upgrade projects and opening day preparations!

IMPORTANT SCHOOL DAY PROCEDURES

ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL, VISITING AND PARKING

- **School Hours:** The school day begins at 9:30 and ends at 3:50.
- **Transportation:** Buses will drop students off and pick them up at the main entrance to VES. Your child's transportation arrangements are available on *Parent Resources* accessible from the district home page. Delays during the first days of school are normal.
- **Before School Drop Off** If you need to drive your child to school, you must travel on Spruce Drive and use the rear entrance of the school. This entrance will be open from 9:20 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. When dropping children off at the rear entrance in the morning, if you stop your vehicle **next** to the school sidewalk, your child may exit by his or her self on that side of your vehicle. However, if your child has to walk across lanes of traffic, you **must** walk him or her to the sidewalk. Please do not drop students off in the front of Village School during morning arrival from 9:20-9:30 as these roadways will be filled with moving buses. After 9:30 a.m., park in our new front visitors' lot and **an adult must sign children in at the main office.**
- **After School Pickup:** If you need to pick your child up at the end of the school day, park in the new back lot and enter through the cafeteria doors or park on the right side of the back driveway and enter through the main rear entrance doors. Students will be dismissed to the cafeteria for parent pick-up at 3:45 p.m. as instruction takes place up until this time. **Parents must sign children out in the cafeteria.** Please send a note to your child's teacher in the morning if you plan on picking up your child in the afternoon or if your child is attending an after school activity. **Without a note, children will be sent to their buses.** Midday and end of day pickup requests can be disruptive to instruction and are difficult to honor as dismissal information is confirmed early in the day.
- **Late or Midday Drop off/Pickup:** If you need to drop off or pickup your child between the hours of 9:30 and 3:45, please park in our new visitors' parking lot in the front of VES and use the main front entrance. Parking is no longer permitted in the front driveway as it is now a bus driveway only. **After 9:30 a.m., children must be signed in by an adult.** You must submit a request in writing in advance if a late arrival or early pick up is planned. (BOE Policy 5230) **Please sign your child in or out at the main office.**
- **School Day Visits:** All parents/visitors arriving between 9:30 and 3:45 must enter and exit through the front entrance, sign in at the main office, indicate scheduled appointment destinations, and obtain a nametag. During special events, the Spruce Drive/rear entrance hours will be extended. These times will be communicated in advance.
- **Parking:** Parents/visitors may park in our new front visitors' lot, our side lot, or our gigantic new lot in the back between 9:30 and 3:45. When parking in the back lot, visitors will, in most cases, need to walk around VES and enter the front main entrance as all doors are locked at 9:30. Please use caution when parking along the side of the road and driveways. **Always park off the road to the right as far as possible and do not block roadways. Parking is prohibited in designated fire zones and in the bus driveway.**
- **Traffic Flow:** From Main Blvd., turn onto Brophy Circle toward the rear of the school. Bear left, traveling **west** on Spruce Drive or **west** into the driveway. Please maintain a one way traffic flow (counterclockwise) around the school at all times. There are one way signs to serve as reminders. To exit, continue west on Spruce Drive, or left on Schley Road, both will lead you back to Main Blvd.



More Helpful Information

- * **Communicating With Teachers:** The best ways to communicate or set up an appointment with teachers are by sending an email, writing a note, or by leaving a voicemail message.
- * **Reporting Absences:** Please call the school's main number (609) 466-7606 and press one to help us verify that your child will not be in on that day. Please state your child's name, teacher's name, the date and reason for the absence.
- * **Lunch Information:** Students may bring lunch from home or purchase a school lunch. Detailed information about the purchasing procedures are attached.
- * **Snacks:** You may pack a healthy snack and water for your child. Water helps us maintain a clean classroom environment. Snacks may be eaten in the morning for those with a late lunch and in the afternoon for those with an early lunch.
- * **Backpacks:** While rolling backpacks are popular and convenient items for today's students, please note that these particular backpacks can pose a tripping hazard in our busy hallways and do not fit into students' individual classroom cubbies designed to hold his/her personal belongings during the school day.
- * **Games/Electronic Devices/Cell Phones:** Due to the risk of loss, damage, and disruption to the learning environment, the use of these items during the school day is strongly discouraged. Students are encouraged to engage in social interactions with their peers during lunch, recess, and on the bus ride to and from school. If games and electronics are brought to school, students will be required to keep them off and in backpacks during instructional time. Cell phones may not be used during school hours.
- * **Roller Sneakers:** For safety reasons, students are not permitted to wear roller sneakers to school with the wheels installed.



The History of Blazer, Our Bluebird



Bluebirds were the original harbingers of spring until their numbers were decimated through use of pesticides and habitat destruction before the age of environmental awareness. They thrive in areas of open farmlands where insects and old woodpecker holes abound. Montgomery offers this type of habitat which can be enhanced with the provision of bluebird houses.

Cousins of the robin, they have staged a comeback through the efforts of individuals who provide and maintain nesting boxes along bluebird "trails". Several bluebird boxes were placed on VES grounds several years ago. As a result of this, bluebirds have become almost commonplace around VES and Montgomery. Students can learn about and observe these unobtrusive, beautiful little birds right here on school grounds while practicing caring and responsibility for our fellow creatures.

In April 2006, Village Students voted to name our mascot Blazer the Bluebird and in 2007 they voted for our school motto: Blazer says, "Be Your Best at VES!"

Mr. Hadinger

Guidance Offerings from Mrs. Fornal and Ms. Laera

Hello! We are very excited to begin the school year! Throughout the year, we will provide many opportunities for students to work with one of us when they need help. We will work with students both individually and in small groups. Parents and teachers may refer students when they feel a child needs a safe place to go to express their thoughts, feelings and concerns. Listed below, you can learn a little more about different groups we will be offering this year.

The first group of the year, the Newcomers Club, will be held during the first few weeks school to assist new students with their transition into Montgomery Township Schools. The students will be given the opportunity to talk to other new students, ask questions about the school, and to participate in activities. Other groups that will be offered throughout the year focus on helping students with Social skills, Controlling Emotions, Self-Esteem, Separation/Divorce, Loss, How Your Engine Runs, Organization, Relaxation and Siblings of Special Needs. These groups will begin in late September or early October. Parents are encouraged to contact us if they feel their children would benefit from any of these groups. Mrs. Fornal can be reached at 609-466-7606 ext. 2246 or lfornal@mtsd.us. Ms. Laera can be reached at 609-466-7606 ext. 2878 or alaera@mtsd.us. We will provide more information in September about Ms. Laera's shared OHES/VES schedule and how we will share guidance responsibilities.

As the year progresses, we will also be periodically demonstrating guidance activities in the classrooms which will emphasize the pillars of character. The pillars include: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, Citizenship, Sportsmanship, Friendship, Honesty, and Leadership. We will also work closely with teachers, administrators, and other faculty to monitor the academic, social, and emotional needs of students to determine the appropriate interventions that can help students reach their full potential. We look forward to a successful year and to working with many students and parents.

DISTRICT POLICY UPDATES

The Montgomery Township School District annually disseminates information on the following school district policies and regulations:

P 5200	Attendance
P 5230	Late Arrival and Early Dismissal
P 5330	Administration of Medication
P 5331	Management of Life-Threatening Allergies in School
P5338	Diabetes Management
P 5350	Pupil Suicide Prevention
P 5530	Substance Abuse
P 5512	Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying
P 5600	Pupil Discipline/Code of Conduct
P 5751	Sexual Harassment

District policy and mandatory regulations can be located on our district web-site at www.mtsd.k12.nj.us. By following the link entitled "Board of Education" and by clicking on the left hand menu entitled "Board of Education Policies", you will be able to access all school policies. For those who do not have access to a computer, copies of the policies are available in the main office of the schools.

Dear Village School Parents and Guardians



Welcome back! I hope everyone had a great summer. I invite you to review September's lunch menu online at www.mtsd.k12.nj.us. Simply select Village Elementary School from the main page and click on "Lunch Menu" to access the menu each month. To help your child know what is for lunch each day, it would be helpful if you could go over the menu the night before. This will help prevent unnecessary tears when children find they don't care for the day's hot lunch selection.

Please ensure that your child has the necessary funds in his/her account. You can check on this daily/weekly by calling the kitchen in the morning to find out the remaining balance or go to our new online site www.payforit.net. At the point that your child has five lunches remaining, the cashier will give your child a friendly reminder. Mrs. Armstrong, my assistant Director, will contact you by phone or email in order to remind you to make a deposit to your child's account. Lunch deposit forms are available on the school website. Children are permitted to buy only two hot lunches on credit. If by chance the funds do not get replenished at this point we will offer a Peanut Butter and Jelly Lunch Bag, or Fun Bagel Lunch Bag until the account is replenished. Students with peanut allergies will be offered a bagel as health alerts are in the computerized system and appear on the screen during check out. You will still be charged for these lunches. Lunch at the elementary schools will cost \$2.00 and milk will cost \$.50.

To help ensure that children with peanut allergy's are not in jeopardy of cross contamination only pre-made, pre packaged Uncrustables will be served in the kitchen. Our pizza on Fridays is made with a whole wheat crust, and our chicken nuggets and patties are all white meat. Our goal is to nourish our students. With this in mind, we will be rolling out our new Environments Menu adding more fresh fruits and vegetables.

Your child may choose one item from the main menu, i.e. hamburger, salad, Uncrustable or a premade deli sandwich or the hot alternate that will be featured each week. Children may choose a hot or cold vegetable, fresh or cupped fruit, and 1%white, fat free, strawberry or chocolate milk. A complete lunch comes with five components, meat/meat alternate, bread, vegetable, fruit and milk. Each child must select three of the five components in order for us to ring up a complete lunch and not ala carte items.

We will also be selling baked chips, low fat sherbet and fruit or veggie cups for snacks as time permits during the week. Children may purchase one snack a day. The snacks range in price from \$0.25 to \$1.00. Water is not a part of lunch and is offered as an ala carte item for \$1.00. The State of NJ set this rule stating that water has no nutritional value.

We hope this information will help you and your child have a happy, healthy lunch experience. To learn more about Chartwells, visit our website at www.eatlearnlive.com. We're excited about our long partnership with Montgomery Township Schools and hope to provide a great program while becoming part of the Montgomery community.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 609-466-7602 ext. 6510/6511, or the Village Elementary School Kitchen 609-333-8575 please speak with Lisa.

Patricia Kurczewski
 Director of Dining Services
chartwells@mtsd.us

With our computerized debit card system you may choose to pay cash or deposit cash/checks into your child's account! Deposits can be made using our new online payment system starting September 1, 2011. Log onto www.payforit.net the screens will guide you through the process to establish your account. Deposits are made available the day the money is received by the staff.

Make checks/money orders payable to Montgomery Board of Education - Cafeteria Account. Please complete the bottom portion of this letter and return with your deposit in an envelope marked "Lunch Program." Though it is preferred that students utilize the debit system, **cash will still be accepted at all registers**. Cashiers will verbally notify children when they have only five prepaid lunches remaining. You will also be contacted by phone or email. Students will be permitted to purchase up to two lunches on credit.

Please detach and return to the cafeteria with your deposit and child's ID # in a sealed envelope marked "LUNCH PROGRAM."

Student's Name: _____ ID# _____ Grade: _____ Teacher's Name: _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____ Method of Payment: (check one) _____ Cash _____ Check _____ Money Order

Village Elementary School
Home of Blazer the Bluebird
100 Main Boulevard
Skillman, NJ 08558



*Blazer says,
"Be Your Best at VES!"*

SUSAN LACY, PRINCIPAL
EMAIL: SLACY@MTSD.K12.NJ.US
ALFRED HADINGER, VICE PRINCIPAL
EMAIL: AHADINGER@MTSD.K12.NJ.US
Phone: 609-466-7606
Fax: 609-466-7196



Get the latest weather updates and information from our VES weather station and camera by clicking on WeatherBug at the VES site!

MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission as a forward-thinking community is to ensure that students grow into confident, compassionate, and successful learners in a global society by providing engaging and challenging educational experiences in a student-centered environment.

Six Day Rotational Schedule

September	Day
8	1
9	2
12	3
13	4
14	5
15	6
16	1

VES works on a six-day rotational schedule for related arts classes. Your child's teacher will inform you of the class' related arts schedule within the first few days of school. For the entire VES 2011-2012 six-day rotational calendar please visit the VES website at www.mtsd.k12.nj.us.

Village School Hours

9:30-3:50

Early Dismissal 9:30-1:30

Emergency Delayed Opening 11:30-3:50

Health Office Request

Any medications that must be administered to your child during the school day may be brought to the VES nurses, Mrs. McGuirk or Mrs. Woodard, in the Health Office on September 6th or 7th.

VES Online Parent Handbook Available This Fall

VES now has a parent handbook which will be available on our website in mid-September. It includes helpful and comprehensive information about VES procedures and practices and links to important documents and resources.

Please visit the district homepage at www.mtsd.k12.nj.us under Headlines for the 2011-2012 School District Calendar!

ALERTNOW:

HAVE YOU UPDATED YOUR INFORMATION?

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Montgomery Township School District is working to update our student database system with the most current contact information for parents and guardians. If you are new to the district, you will receive a Student Information Card on the first day of school in order to establish an account.

If you have been in the district, an AlertNowAccess.com account has been created for you. AlertNowAccess.com will allow you to choose which phone numbers and email addresses your child's school uses to communicate with you.

To complete your registration, please follow these simple steps:

- 1) Open a browser and visit <https://www.alertnowaccess.com>
- 2) Click the "Click here to reset your password" link - Enter the email address at which you received this email
- 3) Press the "Request Password Reset" button - You will receive a password reset confirmation email
- 4) Follow the steps in the password reset confirmation email

Once you have logged in, you may add/delete phone numbers and email addresses. You may also select what types of messages to receive at each phone number or email address. WHEN ENTERING A NEW PHONE NUMBER OR EMAIL ADDRESS, please specify what type of contact it is in the comment box to the right. For example, 609-555-1212 Mother's cell phone number.

Emergency School Closing Information

In the event of inclement weather, hazardous road conditions, or any other emergencies requiring us to close schools for one day, **AlertNow phone messages** will be used to notify families. You may also check the following:

- **Message Line: 609-466-7610**
- **District Website: www.mtsd.k12.nj.us**
- **NJ 101.5 FM**
- **Channel 14 (Local Access Cable)**

VES Families:

In the event of an emergency school closing, the 6-day rotation cycle will remain unchanged. For example: If we have an emergency closing/snow day on Day 1, the following school day will remain Day 2. Missed days will be made up later in the school year. Please see the district calendar for details.



YWCA After School Program at VES

The YWCA of Princeton provides childcare before and after school for children who attend VES. The YWCA tailors its hours to accommodate working families, and offers children diverse and enriching activities in a safe and nurturing environment. Registration packets will be available in the main office. For more information, you may visit our website at: www.ywcaprinceton.org or call the YWCA After School Program Office at: 609-497-2100 X327. Please clearly state your name, your child's name, and a phone number where we can return your phone call.

*This newsletter is available online at www.mtsd.k12.nj.us/ves.
Newsletters will be sent via AlertNow and will also be available online.*