

Village Elementary School



Student and Parent Handbook 2015-2016

September 2015

Dear Families,

On behalf of the entire staff at Village Elementary School, welcome to our school community. This handbook is intended to assist you in your orientation to Village Elementary School and to try to answer some of the most frequently asked questions about our school.

Our VES community is committed to providing children in grades three and four with an academically challenging program in a nurturing and supportive environment. Our goal is to teach children to become independent learners and to help them apply skills developed in the primary grades.

The Village School staff, in partnership with parents and the greater Montgomery community, delivers a rich and differentiated program designed to prepare children to succeed as students and to become life-long learners ready for a changing world.

The focus of our literacy program is to create fluent readers and writers whose command of language is exemplary. In mathematics and science, children flourish in an environment that is rich in problem solving and inquiry. They learn to ask as well as answer important questions.

Children at Village School also have regular opportunities to continue to study art, music, world language and physical education. A special facet of the curriculum at Village School is the integrated use of technology to support classroom instruction.

Village School has an active and well-integrated character education program. Every month, a pillar of character is highlighted throughout the school. Teachers create opportunities in all areas of the curriculum for students to examine and make good moral and ethical choices. They also employ strategies to build student independence and strong, positive and collaborative classroom communities.

Parent involvement at Village School is an important part of the school's culture. Because the PTA provides countless hours of volunteer service, Village Elementary School students are able to enjoy a tremendously enhanced program. We encourage you to become members and participants in our PTA.

Please do not hesitate to contact us directly with any additional questions that you may have. We hope that you have a terrific school year with us!

Sincerely,

Ms. Susan E. Lacy

Principal

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NOTE: The information in this handbook is subject to change due to changes or revisions to district policies and/or state code that may occur during the school year. The most current version of this handbook can be found online.

Montgomery Township School District

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.

Board of Education

Mr. Humberto Goldoni, President
Ms. Sandra M. Donnay
Mr. Dharmesh H. Doshi
Mr. Shreesh R. Tiwari

Ms. Christine Witt, Vice President
Mr. Nicholas Hladick
Mr. Charles F. Jacey Jr.
Mr. Dale Huff
Mrs. Amy Miller

Central Office Administration

Ms. Nancy Gartenberg, Superintendent
Mrs. Deborah Sarmir, Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Fiona Borland, Director of Instructional Technology
Ms. Kelly Mattis, Director of Human Resources
Mrs. Mary McLoughlin, Director of Pupil Services
Mr. Damian Pappa, Director of Assessment
Ms. Annette Wells, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Mr. Ron Zalika, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Village Elementary School

Contact Information

Main Office

Village Elementary School
100 Main Boulevard
Skillman, New Jersey 08558
609-466-7606 (phone)
609-466-7196 (fax)

Ms. Susan Lacy, Principal
slacy@mtsd.us
Mrs. Jaime Maccarone, Assistant Principal
jmaccarone@mtsd.us

Ms. Lynda Bidetti, Secretary
Mrs. Maureen Ocleppo, Secretary
Mrs. Mara Wilmot, Media Center Clerk

lbidetti@mtsd.us , x2560
mocleppo@mtsd.us , x2555
mwilmot@mtsd.us

Health Office

Mrs. Patricia Cizin, RN, CSN
Mrs. Janis Woodard, RN
609-466-7606

pcizin@mtsd.us
jwoodard@mtsd.us
609-466-7193 (fax)

Anti-Bullying Contact Information

School Anti-Bullying Specialists
Mrs. Lauren Fornal
Mrs. Jolene Schantz
Village Elementary School
100 Main Boulevard
Skillman, New Jersey 08558
609-466-7606
lfornal@mtsd.us
jschantz@mtsd.us

District Anti-Bullying Coordinator
Ms. Kelly Mattis,
Montgomery Board of Education
1014 Route 601
Skillman, New Jersey
609-466-7601
kmattis@mtsd.us

Guidance Office

Mrs. Jolene Schantz, Grade 3
Mrs. Lauren Fornal, Grade 4

jschantz@mtsd.us
lfornal@mtsd.us

Pupil Services Office

Mrs. Lia Camuto, Supervisor of Pupil Services PreK-4 lcamuto@mtsd.us

Child Study Team

Meghan Knapp, School Psychologist
Donna Siani, Learning Consultant
Julianna Fragulis, Secretary

mknapp@mtsd.us
dsiani@mtsd.us
jfragulis@mtsd.us

Curriculum Supervisors

Mrs. Amy Monaco
Supervisor of Language Arts and Social Studies K-4
Mrs. Amy Wish
Supervisor of Mathematics and Science K-4
Mr. Adam Warshafsky
Supervisor of Visual and Performing Arts K-12
Ms. Alma Reyes
Supervisor of World Languages

amonaco@mtsd.us
awish@mtsd.us
awarshafsky@mtsd.us
areyes@mtsd.us

3rd Grade Family Group A

Potter, Donna / Brown, Cherrie
 Damato, Karen
 Testa, Jennifer
 Pliskin, Lisa

4th Grade Family Group A

Orsini, Joanne / Carro, Lynn
 Lucas, Virginia
 Rodriguez, Max
 Cullinane, Colleen/ Chianese, Jillian

Related Arts

Antoniewicz, Barbara - Library
 Bassford, Joseph - PE
 Belfiore, Michael - PE
 Bell, Laura - Vocal Music
 Dolan, James - Computers
 Egas, Jenny - Spanish
 Goldman, Eugenia - Orchestra (210)
 Goris, Odenis Spanish
 Houston, Cheryl - Band
 O'Connor, Jennifer - Art
 Tanzola, Tammy - PE

Speech/ESL

Nicholas, Marissa
 LaPorte, Anita
 Evertsen, Jean (ESL)

Office Staff

Bidetti, Lynda (Secretary)
 Ocleppo, Maureen (Secretary)

3rd Grade Family Group B

Uhaze, Kaitlin/ Loiacono, Diana
 Bonnet, Jen/ Furfaro, Scott
 Vucin, Kelly
 Scudiero, Samantha
 Furman, Jennifer/ Shockey, Jennifer

4th Grade Family Group B

Vanatta, Kimberly
 Hart Dorn, Danielle/ Bocker, Julia
 Yulo, Jennifer/ Borelli, Samantha
 Hum, Valerie
 LoCoco, Valerie

Math & Literacy Support

Barbarasch, Michelle
 Bassford, Amanda
 Dunham, Kate
 Grande, Sara
 Hvizdos, Tracey
 Walker, Mary

Resource Teachers

Sandler, Melissa
 Berkowitz, , Meredith
 Marencik, Catherine
 Biava, Marlene
 Fedo, Erika

Support Staff

Austerlitz, Adam
 Carroll, Kathleen
 D'Agostino, Angela
 Darcy, Monica
 Grover, Megan
 Hall, Paula
 Hauben, Leslie
 Lynch, Mary
 Maroli, Arlene
 Nagel, Brandi
 Niedt, Chris
 Patel, Suchita
 Opperman, Alison
 Paul, Kakoli
 Rechter, Donna
 Sgammato, Maria
 Singer-Slack, Nancy
 Teeple, Danielle
 Volpe, Teresa
 Wilmot, Mara

3rd Grade Family Group C

Sears, Nancy
 Witkowski, Tori
 Ryan, Alison
 Cramer, Kellie

4th Grade Family Group C

Winer, Laurie
 Benke, Lorin
 Truscinski, Linda/ Varona, Nicole
 Franey, Kurt
 Pignataro, Trish/ Maxwell, Casey

K-4 Supervisors

Monaco, Amy (LA/SS)
 Wish, Amy (Math/Science)
 Camuto, Lia (Pupil Services)

Nurses' Office

Cizin, Patti (School Nurse)
 Woodard, Janis (Registered Nurse)

Pupil Services

Fragulis, Julianna
 Knapp, Meghan
 Siani, Donna

Guidance

Fornal, Lauren
 Schantz, Jolene

Custodial Staff

Colucci, Michael
 Guerrero, Hugo
 Moore, Daniel
 Newbury, Debra (Night Supervisor)
 Hayes, Greg (Maintenance)
 Vaccaro, Kenneth (Head Custodian)

School Hours and Schedule

Regular Day		Hours	
		Emergency Dismissal (Snow Emergency, etc.)	
Grades 3 and 4	9:30-3:50	Grades 3 and 4	9:30-1:30
Early Dismissal		Delayed Opening (Snow Emergency, etc.)	
Grades 3 and 4	9:30-1:30	Grades 3 and 4	11:30-3:50

Six-Day Cycle Schedule

Village and Orchard Hill Schools work on the same six-day cycle schedule for related arts classes. During the first few days of school, your child's teacher will inform you of the related arts classes that your child will have for each given day. A copy of the six-day cycle schedule is attached to the end of this handbook. Should inclement weather cause schools to close, updated copies of this schedule can be found on the Village School website. Look for the "Info" drop down menu and select "Six-Day Cycle Schedule".

Delayed Openings and Emergency Closings

In the event of inclement weather, hazardous road conditions, or any other emergencies requiring us to close schools, the district website will be updated to notify families. Phone messages and emails from the district will be used as well. You may also check the following:

- Channel 27 (Local Access Cable)
- Message Line: 609-466-7610
- NJ 101.5 FM

After school activities are often cancelled during an emergency closing. The organizations running these activities (ie. YMCA Program, Recreation Department, GGS Chinese School, etc.) will communicate this to families of students attending these programs. Students attending these programs will be placed on their bus unless parents contact the school with alternate plans. If this is the case, please call the school at 609-466-7606 to speak with someone in the main office. Do not rely on sending an email to your child's teacher for this communication.

Plan now for how your family will respond to delayed openings and emergency closings. There should always be a backup plan that students can follow, and parents should discuss this with students periodically throughout the school year. *Having a plan in place in advance ensures the safety of all students and staff during an emergency.*

In the event of an emergency school closing, the six-day 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.

Lunch is still served on days where the school is on a delayed opening or early dismissal.

Attendance

Attendance Policy 5200

The Montgomery Township Board of Education requires students enrolled in Montgomery Township schools to attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the state. The consistent contact of students in the classroom with one another and their participation in well-planned instructional activities under the direction of our faculty is vital to their success. Parents are encouraged to work in partnership with their children and school to minimize excessive or unnecessary absenteeism.

The Montgomery Township Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to provide a thorough and efficient education for every student within the district in keeping with the prevailing laws of the State of New Jersey. In order for administrators and teachers to successfully fulfill their responsibilities to students, it is essential that all students accept their responsibility to attend school as scheduled, and that parents/guardians support and reinforce their child's regular attendance.

To conform to state regulations requiring school districts to define "**excused**" and "**unexcused**" absences:

An "**excused absence**" is a student's absence from school for a full day or portion of a day for one or more of the following reasons:

- New Jersey state approved religious holidays pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14,
- Take Your Child To Work Day
- Montgomery High School curricular/co-curricular activities held during the school day or requiring early dismissal

Additional "**excused absences**" as determined by Montgomery Township School District are listed below:

- Personal illness supported by documentation from a healthcare provider
- Personal illness supported by a note from parent, at the discretion of the principal
- The student's required attendance in court
- Where appropriate, when consistent with Individualized Education Programs
- The student's suspension from school
- Family illness or death supported by a written letter from the parent upon the student's return to school (up to five days)
- Visits to post-secondary institutions, juniors and seniors only maximum 3 days (documented by a statement from the admissions office)
- Examination for a driver's license
- Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day (health care provider documentation)
- An absence for a reason not listed above, but deemed excused by the school administrator in charge of attendance, upon written request by the student's parent/guardian stating the

reason for the absence and requesting permission for the absence to be an excused absence

An **unexcused absence** is a student's absence for all or 4+ hours of a school day for any reason other than those that are considered excused.

Please note that excused absences are still lost instructional days and may impact the students' academic standing. Every effort should be made to ensure students attend as many of the 180 school days as possible. You may contact the Vice Principal's Office should you have any questions. We appreciate your cooperation.

Notice to School of Student Absence

Parents should call the attendance line, as outlined below. **This does not "excuse" an absence but informs the school that your child is absent with your knowledge.** The student's absence will be deemed "**excused**" or "**unexcused counting toward truancy**," based upon the documentation explaining the reason for the absence(s) that is presented to the Main Office by the student following their return to school. The school will contact the parents/guardians of any student who is absent for whom a phone call from home was not received.

To Report Your Child Absent

- **Before 9:00 am:** Call the District Attendance Hotline at 609-466-7610, Select option 1 and then option 2 again for Village Elementary School.
- **Between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm:** Call Village Elementary School at 609-466-7606, select option 2 to reach the main office.
- Please call as early as possible to report an absence. This does not "excuse" an absence but rather verifies the absence because you informed the school that your child is absent with your knowledge. The student's absence will be deemed either "excused" or "unexcused" based upon the documentation explaining the reason for the absence (s) that is presented to the main office upon the student's return to school. The school will make every effort to contact parents/guardians of any student who is absent for whom a phone call from home was not received.
- If you send an email to your child's teacher about an absence, it is important to still call one of the phone numbers listed above to verify the absence.
- If your child will be absent from school for an extended period of time (i.e. vacation, visiting family, etc.) it is recommended that the family keep a daily journal and read during these times. Orchard Hill does not provide school work or supplies during these times.
- Regular breaks are built into the school calendar. It is strongly recommended that families plan vacations during these times to avoid interruption to their child's learning.

Making Up Work Following an Absence

Upon a student's return to school, a student's classroom teacher will arrange for making up missed assignments and assessments with the student and his/her parent(s). Assessments will be made up during the school day. Missed assignments may be made up during the school day if possible and as part of homework as needed. If a student is absent for a non-health-related absence, school assignments and supplies may not be sent home.

School Response to Unexcused Absences

N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6 guides schools' responses for unexcused absences as follows:

For up to four cumulative unexcused absences, the school district shall:

- make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parents/guardians of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day
- make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the student's parents/guardians
- identify in consultation with the student's parents/guardians needed action designed to address patterns of unexcused absences, if any, and to have the child return to school and maintain regular attendance
- proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10, if a potential missing or abused child situation is detected; and cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.

For between five and nine cumulative unexcused absences, the school district shall:

- make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parents/guardians of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day
- make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the student's parents/guardians
- evaluate the appropriateness of prior action taken
- develop an action plan to establish outcomes based upon the student's patterns of unexcused absences and to specify the interventions for supporting the student's return to school and regular attendance, which may include any or all of the following:
 - refer or consult with the building's intervention and referral services team (I&RS), pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8;
 - conduct testing, assessments, or evaluations of the student's academic, behavioral, and health needs
 - consider an alternate educational placement
 - make a referral to or coordinate with a community-based social and health provider agency or other community resource
 - refer to a court or a court program
 - proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A.9:6-1 et. Seq. and N.J.A.C.6A:16-10, if a potentially missing or child abuse situation is detected: and engage the student's family, cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate

- engage the student's family
- cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.

For cumulative unexcused absences of 10 or more, a student, between the ages of six and 16, is truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the school district shall:

- make a determination regarding the need for a court referral for the truancy
- continue to consult with the parent/guardian and the involved agencies to support the student's return to school and regular attendance
- cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate; and proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:38-28 through 31, Article 3B, Compelling Attendance at School, and other applicable State and Federal statutes, as required; and a court referral may be made as follows:
 - when unexcused absences are determined by school officials to be violations of the compulsory education law, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the district board of education's policies, the parent/guardian may be referred to municipal court; a written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student's attendance shall be forwarded to the municipal court
 - or when there is evidence of a juvenile-family crisis, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-22.g, the student may be referred to Superior Court, Chancery Division, Family Part; a written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student's attendance shall be forwarded to the juvenile-family crisis intervention unit.

For a student with a disability, the attendance plan and its punitive and remedial procedures shall be applied, where applicable, in accordance with the student's individualized education program, pursuant to 20 U.S.C 1400 et seq., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14; accommodation plan under 29 U.S.C. 794 and 705(20); and individualized healthcare plan and individualized emergency healthcare plan, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3(b)5xii.

Absence and Student Activities

Students must be in school for 4 hours to be considered present for the day. A child who is in school for less than 4 hours will be marked absent. In order for any student to participate in after-school activities (clubs, team practices, games, plays, concerts, etc.), he/she **must be in school for four (4) hours on the day of the activity**. Any student who is absent or serving a suspension on the day of a scheduled school event will not be allowed to attend the school event as a participant or spectator.

To Check Your Child's Absences

You can log in to your Parent Resources account to check your child's total absences.

If you see a discrepancy in your child's attendance record, please contact the school at 609-466-7605 or email Lynda Bidetti at lbidetti@mtsdsd.us. If you have questions about your Parent Resources account, please contact Jaime Velez at jvelez@mtsdsd.us.

Late Arrival to School

Students are expected to be in school by 9:30 am during a normal school day. Students arriving after 9:30 am must be signed in at the main office and will be marked as tardy.

Early Dismissal from School

Parents are encouraged to schedule doctor/dentist appointments after school hours. However, personal circumstances may arise requiring a student to be released early from school. To ensure the smooth and safe handling of such situations, parents must send an email or note that includes:

- Date
- Name of student
- Reason for the early dismissal (i.e. doctor/dentist appointment- doctor's/dentist's name, appointment time, and telephone number, etc.)
- A telephone number where the parents may be reached during the school day

A parent picking a student up early should come to the main office and present a photo-ID. After a photo-ID is presented, a secretary will call the classroom to have your child come to the office. The parent will sign the student out. Students returning to school after signing out earlier in the day must re-enter via the main office and sign back in.

If someone other than the parent or guardian is to meet the student, a note is required indicating the person has parent/guardian permission to pick up that particular child. That person must present a photo-ID before the child can be released.

Busing

Transportation Department

All students of Village are provided with busing to and from school. Specific information about your child's bus route and number can be found on your Parent Resources account.

No student may ride on any bus other than his/her assigned bus nor may s/he leave the bus at any stop other than the assigned stop. It is preferred that all students are met by an adult at the bus stop at the end of the school day.

Transportation Department
Robyn Friedlander, Supervisor of Transportation
Jesus (Chu) Velazquez, Assistant Supervisor of Transportation

609-466-7601 x7010 or x7024
rfriedlander@mtsd.us
jvelazquez@mtsd.us

Bus Safety and Behavior Expectations

Riding the bus is a privilege and students are expected to abide by school rules and act in a safe manner at all times. Failure to do so will result in a discipline referral to the main office, and, in serious cases, may result in loss of bus transportation. In such cases, parents shall provide for transportation to and from school during the period of such exclusion.

The following are expectations for students riding the bus:

- Be safe while waiting for and getting on and off the bus
 - Wait for bus to stop completely
 - Walk instead of run
 - Be patient as you and others get on and off
- Listen to the bus driver since s/he is in charge of the bus
- Stay safe on the bus by:
 - Staying in your assigned seat
 - Buckling your seatbelt correctly
 - Sitting correctly in your seat
 - Not reaching out the window
- Treat others with respect while riding the bus
- Keep your bus clean and safe for everyone by not eating on the bus and keeping it clear of all trash
- If there is a problem on the bus it is important to let the bus driver know
- Remember that the bus driver is focused on the safety of everyone and should not be distracted while driving unless an emergency is being reported

Drop-off and Pick-up

School Hours: 9:30 - 3:50

Early Dismissal Hours: 9:30-1:30 (Parent pick up begins at 1:15)

Emergency Delayed Opening: 11:30-3:50 (Student drop off 11:20-11:30)

- **Transportation:** Buses will drop students off and pick them up at the main entrance to VES. Your child's transportation arrangements are available on *Genesis* 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. Please do not drop your child off early as the doors will be locked until 9:20.** 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 on his or her own 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 at any time, except for before school programs. After 9:30 a.m., park in our 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 large back lot and enter through the cafeteria doors or park on the right side of the back driveway that is between the school and the traffic island. Enter through the main rear entrance doors. **Please do not park on the roadway itself as it creates a traffic hazard.** 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.
- **School Day Visits:** All parents/visitors arriving between 9:30 and 3:45 must provide photo identification. After you push the button to buzz in, you must give your name and scheduled appointment destination, enter through the front entrance, report to the main office, show identification, sign in and obtain a visitor nametag. During special events, the Spruce Drive/rear entrance hours may be extended. These times will be communicated in advance. Visitors must sign out in the office before leaving the premises.
- **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 visitors' parking lot in the front of VES and use the main front entrance. Parking is not permitted in the front driveway as it is 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 Parking:** Parents/visitors may park in our front visitors' lot, our side lot, or our large lot in the back between 9:30 and 3:45. When parking in the back lot, all visitors will need to walk around VES and enter the front main entrance. **Please do not park on or block roadways.** If you absolutely must park on a roadway, use caution and park on the far right side. **Parking is always prohibited in designated fire zones and in the bus driveway.** 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.**
-

Visiting Village School

- When visiting, please park in the parking lot in the front and walk to the main entrance.
- **All visitors need to present a photo ID when entering the school**, sign in at the office and enter and exit through the main entrance. During special events, the Spruce Drive/rear entrance hours may be extended. These times will be communicated in advance. Visitors must sign out in the office before leaving the premises.
- All visitors will receive a name tag and must wear it while visiting Village School.
- The parking lot in front of Village is only for dropping off or picking up students or supplies after 9:30 am and before 3:00 pm. If you will be visiting for a longer period of time, you should park in the parking lot on the east side of Village School, the lot across Main Boulevard in front of Village School (part of Skillman Park) or the large parking lot behind the school. If you absolutely must park on a roadway, use caution and park on the far right side. **Parking is always prohibited in designated fire zones and in the bus driveway.** 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.** In all cases, entry into to the school is only through the front main entrance.

Student Discipline

Positive Behavior Supports

Responsive Classroom

The Responsive Classroom[®] approach is a way of teaching that emphasizes social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community. Developed by classroom teachers, the approach consists of practical strategies for helping students build academic and social-emotional competencies day in and day out. How students learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand. The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction. To be successful academically and socially, students need a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. At Village School, we place a strong emphasis on knowing

the students we teach — individually, culturally, and developmentally — and partnering with their families for success. Some common practices seen in Responsive Classrooms include morning meeting, interactive modeling, positive teacher language, logical consequences, guided discovery, and academic choice.

Pillars of Character

Each year, students experience a variety of programs and activities related to the six pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship. Several years ago, Village School students voted to add four additional pillars: sportsmanship, leadership, honesty and friendship. We focus on one pillar each month beginning with responsibility in September.

Student Code of Conduct

The ultimate purpose of discipline is to help students learn to be responsible, productive contributors to society. Teachers and administrators endeavor to be firm, yet fair, while maintaining the dignity of the student. Schools are responsible for all students whether they are in the classroom, hallway, bus, cafeteria, or on the playground.

Village School uses five main rules as guiding principles in our work with students:

- Be safe
- Take care of property
- Be respectful
- Take responsibility for your actions
- Be in control of your body and words

When a student breaks a rule, a school staff member will work to help the student see the connection between his/her actions and consequences, as well as between the act and the rule that was broken. Logical consequences are considered, along with the age level and developmental needs of the

students, the history of the unacceptable behavior, and the circumstances of the offense. Logical consequences include:

- **Take a break** - Student takes time to sit and reflect on behavior in order to regain self-control and make a positive plan for moving forward.
- **You break it; you fix it** - Student takes responsibility for fixing a problem s/he caused.
- **Loss of privilege** - Student temporarily loses a privilege after not meeting pre-established expectations.

Student discipline is progressive. Most misbehavior is addressed at the classroom level with teachers and staff. Student discipline may include a school administrator when misbehaviors continue beyond this or when the seriousness of a situation requires corrective action from a school administrator. Bus-related misbehavior is addressed by the bus driver initially. If needed, it is forwarded to school administrators.

Consequences may include but are not limited to:

- Take a break
- You break it; you fix it
- Loss of privilege
- Guidance counseling session
- Meeting with parents
- Referral to Intervention & Referral Services team
- Referral to Child Study Team
- Detention before or after school
- In school suspension
- Out of school suspension
- Expulsion

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory (handicap) disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds... that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:

- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student’s property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property;
- Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students, in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school;
- Creates a hostile educational environment at school for the student;
- Infringes on the rights of the student at school by interfering with a student’s education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.”

All formal reports of possible Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying must be first submitted to the building principal. The building principal determines if the report contains:

- Evidence of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct
- Evidence of a potential violation of the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying policy

All situations where there is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct are addressed by the school regardless of whether or not it appears that there is a potential violation of the Harassment,

Intimidation, and Bullying policy. Consequences are determined by the acts committed, the age level and developmental needs of the students, the history of the unacceptable behavior, and the circumstances of the offense; **not** whether the incident is labeled as bullying or not.

If there is evidence of a potential violation of the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying policy, the building principal will start a formal investigation to determine if the situation is in violation of the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying policy. The school will inform the families of students involved and the school's anti-bullying specialist will begin the investigation.

Students who have witnessed or been victimized by harassment/bias statements/actions or bullying should report the incident immediately to a teacher, counselor, and/or an administrator. For detailed information regarding district policy 5512 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying please visit the Montgomery Township School District website.

If you would like to file a formal complaint regarding Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying please contact Ms. Susan Lacy at slacy@mtsd.us.

Village School Anti-Bullying Specialists:

Lauren Fornal, lfornal@mtsd.us

Jolene Schantz, jschantz@mtsd.us

District Anti-Bullying Coordinator: Kelly Mattis, kmattis@mtsd.us

Dress Code

We expect the students will come to school in a manner that promotes an atmosphere for learning. In the event your child arrives at school inappropriately dressed, we will contact you.

The following dress code pertains to all VES students (Board Policy # 5511):

1. Students are not to wear hats or any form of head coverings (including but not limited to baseball caps, hats, or bandannas) or sunglasses while inside the school, unless for religious or health related reasons or for a school based special event.
2. Items of clothing that would impair the health and safety of the student, other students or the district are not allowed, nor are items of clothing that would distract the student or other students.
3. Sneakers are the ideal footwear for play during recess and for Physical Education. For safety reasons, the wearing of beach type flip-flops or bedroom slippers is prohibited.
4. Shorts that are short, tank tops and other clothes that are less practical for play are discouraged.

Lunch, Recess, Snack and Food in the Classrooms

Behavior Expectations During Lunch and Recess

Students in third and fourth grades have lunch in our cafeteria and recess on the playgrounds. During inclement weather, students may have indoor recess in their classrooms. Please remember to make sure your child has appropriate, supportive footwear for playing during recess, as well as clothes appropriate for the weather. Though there are staff members present who can assist students in opening lunch containers, it is best if you pack a lunch in containers that your child is able to open independently.

Students are expected to abide by school rules and act in a safe manner at all times. The lunch and recess time is staffed by Village School educational support assistants as well as other teachers and staff. The PTA also has parent volunteers who help all students present at a given lunch time.

The following are expectations for lunch and recess:

- Follow the expectations of the school and your classroom
- Listen to the lunch teachers, teachers, and parent volunteers
- Stay safe at lunch and recess by:
 - Staying in your seat in the cafeteria
 - Walking in the cafeteria when getting up
 - Waiting patiently and respectfully on lines for lunch, going outside, and waiting for your teacher
 - Using the recess equipment appropriately
- Treat others with respect
- Keep the cafeteria clean and safe for everyone by clearing all trash and recycling
- Take care of cafeteria and school equipment
- If there is a problem, it is important to let an adult at lunch or recess know

The educational support assistants and teachers make initial decisions if a student does not follow these expectations. The majority of these discipline issues are resolved at this level and are used as teaching opportunities for students. Educational support assistants and teachers may determine that a student needs to speak with an administrator in the main office if a student repeatedly has difficulty following these expectations or if a specific situation warrants this level of attention.

Purchasing a School Lunch

Ms. Pat Kurczewski, Director of Dining Services

609-466-7602 x6510 or x6511

chartwells@mtsd.us

Students may bring lunch from home or purchase a school lunch. Chartwells is the company in charge of school lunches. The cost of a school lunch is \$2.30 and milk is \$0.60. Students may pay with cash or use their student ID number to access their prepaid lunch account.

To locate school lunch menus and learn how to prepay your child's lunch account, please visit the [lunch menu](#) page. Click on VES and the lunch menu for the month will appear.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the food service program or your child's lunch account, please feel free to contact Chartwells using the contact information above.

Snacks and Food in the Classrooms

You may choose to pack a healthy snack and water for your child each day. Water will help us maintain a clean classroom environment. Snacks are eaten in classrooms and may be eaten in the morning for those with a late lunch and in the afternoon for those with an early lunch. **Snacks eaten by students in classrooms may not contain peanuts or tree nuts.** Students are not permitted to share their food with other children. **Also, food is no longer permitted for birthday recognitions or class parties.** Please review policy and regulation 5331 regarding Management of Life Threatening Allergies for more information. A link to it can found on the MTSD website.

Lost and Found

The Lost and Found is located along the left side of the cafeteria on the left when entering the cafeteria. It is maintained by the PTA. It is helpful to label all of your child's belongings on the inside with his/her first and last name if possible. Items found with a student's name on it can easily be returned directly to the student in his/her classroom.

If your child loses an item, please check here for it. You can either check for it here yourself one day or send a note or email to your classroom teacher requesting that your child check the Lost and Found. It sometimes takes a day or two for a lost item to turn up at the Lost and Found. So it is helpful to check

back once or twice. The PTA does clean out the Lost and Found a few times during the year and often announces this before doing so to give families the opportunity to check for lost items one last time.

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 and students are responsible for their safe keeping. 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 their backpacks during school instructional hours. Cell phones may not be used during school hours.

Health Office

Mrs. Patricia Cizin, RN, CSN pcizin@mtsd.us

Mrs. Janis Woodard, RN jwoodard@mtsd.us

609-466-7606, Option 3 (phone)

609-466-7190 (fax)

General Health Guidelines

Our two school nurses are available to provide nursing services and emergency health care for students during the school day. In order to assist the nurses in providing the best care for your child while in school, you may find the information below helpful.

General Health Guidelines

One of the most common concerns for any parent of a school age student is if the student should stay home from school due to an illness. [Click here](#) for information regarding illness.

The VES website contains information regarding [lice](#), [nutrition](#), [immunizations](#), [Sun safety](#) and [Lyme Disease](#). There are also other helpful links.

Medication Administration in school

Nurses at VES can administer prescribed (routine and emergency medications) as well as over the counter medications to students during the school day. Prescribed medications need to be brought into the health office in their original container with a pharmacy label and must be accompanied by a written doctor's prescription or appropriate emergency form. Over the counter medications need a form completed with a physician's or parent's signature to be accompanied by the medication. Some

medications such as Tylenol and Motrin are stocked in the health office. Please refer to the Board of Education policies and regulations regarding medication administration in school on the web site:

<http://www.mtsd.k12.nj.us/Page/96>

Life Threatening Allergies and Asthma

Life Threatening allergies and Asthma are common medication issues in the school age population. If you child has either problem, please contact the school nurse before your child begins school each school year to make sure that the necessary paper work and medications are in place in the event that an emergency occurs while your child is in school.

Guidance Office

Mrs. Jolene Schantz, Third Grade jschantz@mtsd.us x2301

Mrs. Lauren Fornal, Fourth Grade lfornal@mtsd.us x2246

The guidance counselors at Village School serve in many different roles but their primary role is that of a support for students. Through class, small group, and individual interactions with students, the guidance counselors facilitate personal, social, and intellectual growth. The guidance counselors help students develop decision-making skills, adjust to new experiences, and understand their personal abilities and limitations to support the enhancement of students' educational experiences. The guidance counselors also serve as a support to teachers to provide insights on special needs of students. They work closely with Orchard Hill counselors to ensure a smooth transition from second to third grade.

Additionally, they serve as resources to parents and families to ensure every student experiences academic as well as social and emotional growth. Parents should feel free to contact our guidance counselors when they feel their child needs a safe place to go to express his/her thoughts, feelings, and concerns.

Academic Program

Language Arts

Literacy at Village School supports students as they learn to read and write with increasing skill and fluency. The standards-based curriculum focuses on reading and analyzing literature and informational text, close reading, supporting opinions with text evidence, and domain-specific vocabulary. Additionally, teachers engage students in interactive read alouds and guided reading, during which students are exposed to both complex text and books that correlate with their independent and instructional levels. Students become more adept writers, learning to express themselves in a variety of genres including narrative, information, and opinion writing, carefully self-assessing and revising their work. Daily instruction is organized in a workshop structure where students engage in authentic reading and writing while teachers serve as mentors and coaches, providing focused support to meet the needs of individual learners. Students enjoy showcasing their literary knowledge through discussions with peers and teachers during whole-class direct instruction, individual conferences, and small group strategy-based instruction.

Mathematics

Mathematics classes at Village School focus on building deep conceptual understanding along with procedural skills so that students can successfully apply mathematics in a variety of situations. Along with developing an overall number sense, the curriculum lays a solid foundation for students to apply addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to whole numbers, fractions and decimals. Fact fluency and problem solving are important cornerstones of this foundation. Students also participate in a continuous progression of learning in geometry, algebra, measurement and data. Math units follow a concrete-pictorial-abstract learning progression so students learn to make sense of mathematics and practice communicating their understandings to others. Technology tools provide additional ways to access the content and further enhance motivation and learning.

Science

Students are provided with a variety of opportunities to think and work as scientists throughout the year. Students engage with hands-on explorations and activities in life, physical, and earth sciences that develop the science process skills of observation, hypothesis, scientific drawing, measurement and collecting data. Through an increased focus on non-fiction and informational texts, they also have opportunities to apply their reading and writing skills within the science lessons. Students learn to use their scientific knowledge as a springboard to solve problems when they participate in embedded

engineering projects each year.

Social Studies

Our social studies program introduces the world to our students as they build a foundation for a global future. Self-awareness, awareness of the world and its people, a sense of time and place, and the skills required to form positive relationships with those around them are what comprises the primary social studies program. Students will learn about our community and the world around them studying culture and diversity, geography and map skills, and American symbols and history. Our goal is for students to develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

Related Arts

Village School seeks to provide students with a wide variety of educational opportunities. In third and fourth grades students receive health and physical education, art, music, technology, library, and Spanish. Fourth grade students may also elect to participate in chorus and/or begin studying a musical instrument. Students attend these classes using the six-day cycle schedule.

Homework

Based on the research and work of a K-4 committee of teachers, parents, and administrators, the following are our homework guidelines for Village and Orchard Hill Schools.

1. Homework should be relevant to classroom activities and student goals.
2. Homework is intended to be an independent activity for children, to help build student responsibility in addition to extending classroom learning.
3. Homework should never be punitive in nature.
4. All students should be encouraged to read and write outside of school in their free time. However, since a goal of our workshop model is to create lifelong readers and writers, any reading assigned as homework should apply skills and strategies taught in school.
5. The amount of daily assigned homework should not exceed the grade level times ten minutes, on average. For example, in third grade, it would be $3 \times 10 = 30$ minutes.
6. Teachers may or may not assign homework on a given night.
7. Weekend and holiday homework assignments should be avoided whenever possible. Homework should not be given on religious or cultural holidays as listed on the Board approved calendar.
8. Parents who want additional homework for their children beyond these guidelines may supplement school assignments on their own. MTSD also provides web based learning tools for students, *Compass Learning* and *Raz-Kids* that are available to all students in grades K-4 free-of-

charge.

9. These homework guidelines will be communicated to parents at the start of the school year.

English as a Second Language

English as a Second Language is available to K-12 students who are learning to speak and understand English. Students in ESL develop academic language abilities that allow them to successfully participate in instruction in the general classroom. Students may spend less than one full year or up to 3-4 years in ESL, depending on need.

Academic Support Services

Language arts and mathematics support provide modifications and support for students who need assistance in math and/or language arts. Students are identified through standards aligned end-of-year assessments. Support teachers may provide instruction in the classroom or outside of the classroom, depending on what will best serve a student's needs. These services are designed to be flexible in that students will receive support and strategies that enable them to follow the instruction of their classroom teacher without additional teacher support. The clear purpose of this support is to exit students at grade level proficiency in those content areas. Students' learning achievement is reviewed regularly, and students may enter or exit the program at any time during the school year, based on need.

Enrichment Model

Our elementary enrichment model provides students with academic challenges within the regular classroom setting in mathematics and language arts. Each year, students are identified through standards aligned end-of-year assessments. Once identified, the students are clustered together in small groups with other such students. These clusters become part of classes that are otherwise heterogeneous.

Teachers differentiate mathematics instruction regularly, and will do so for the enrichment students in their classes. In language arts, the students are grouped flexibly and move from group to group. Advanced students will likely work together most of the time at higher levels, but be included together with their peers for other activities. Teachers provide them with either different ways of learning or requiring different products of learning, though still founded on the district curriculum for the grade level.

This enrichment model provides our students with opportunities to meet two of their greatest needs; the opportunity to work together with students of similar abilities and/or interests, and, at other times, to work in heterogeneous groups with their peers.

Intervention and Referral Services

Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) are designed to assist students who are experiencing learning, behavior, or health difficulties and to assist staff in addressing these needs. The I&RS team meets regularly throughout the year to partner with teachers and families to address these concerns within the general education program with an emphasis on early identification and intervention. If a student's classroom teacher plans to meet with the I&RS team, s/he communicates this with a student's parents. Parents always receive notes from these meetings and are invited to attend when appropriate.

Pupil Services

Our elementary schools provide comprehensive special education support for students beginning in preschool. Our preschool model includes full day services for students diagnosed with autism, half-day services for students with cognitive or language delays, and inclusive preschool for students who need less support in general education settings.

In kindergarten through fifth grade we provide a continuum of services that includes modifications in the general education setting, in-class support (team teaching provided by general education and special education staff), resource room instruction for students who require small group multi-sensory learning experiences, and language learning disabled and/or multiply disabled classes for students who require greater support. We also have services for students diagnosed with autism, which may take place in particular classes based upon applied behavior analysis, or which may take place in any of the above models.

Our child study teams consist of a school social worker, school psychologist, learning disabilities-teacher consultant, and behaviorist. Speech therapists and occupational therapists provide support to those students who may need services in those areas. Pupil Services also provides extensive professional development for staff and parent training opportunities to solicit the support of all people that impact the lives of students.

Parent Communication

The best educational results happen when parents and teachers work together to plan for and discuss a student's educational needs. We encourage frequent communication between parents and teachers.

E-mail and Voicemail

All Montgomery Township School District teaching staff members have an email account and may be contacted this way. In most, though not all, cases the staff member's email address is the first letter of the staff member's first name and the complete last name followed by @mtsd.us. All teaching staff members also have voicemail and may be reached via voicemail as well.

Back to School Nights

Every year, we hold Back to School Nights for each grade level. Below are the dates for each night.

Third Grade	September 21, 2015
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Fourth Grade	September 24, 2015
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Report Cards and Parent-Teacher Conferences

Report cards and Parent-Teacher Conferences are used to communicate student progress with families on a quarterly basis. Report cards are distributed electronically via Parent Resources in December and June. Parent-Teacher Conferences are held in the fall and spring. Following are the specific dates for these events:

Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences	November 19, 20, 23, 24, 2015 (Early Dismissal schedule for students)
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Mid-year Report Cards	December 23, 2015
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Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences	April 5, 6, 7, 8, 2016 (Early Dismissal schedule for students)
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End of Year Report Cards	June 21, 2016
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Parent Resources

Parent Resources is a communication tool used throughout the Montgomery Township School District to allow students' guardians to:

- View basic student information, schedules, homeroom teacher, bus route, etc.
- View attendance information
- Update your contact information
- View report cards
- View other communications and letters from the school
-

To log into Parent Resources, you will need an account. Many parents already have one, but if you do not or if you experience a problem with your account, please send the following information to Jaime

Velez at jvelez@mtsd.us.

Parent Name

Phone number (daytime)

Parent e-mail address

Student Last Name

Student First Name

Grade

Once your account is created, you will receive an email with your login information. It is important to make sure your contact information remains current to ensure you receive school/district updates and are able to be contacted in the event of an emergency.

If you have older children in the district and already have a Parent Resources account set up, you can simply e-mail jvelez@mtsd.us with your username and the names and grades of your children in Village Elementary School that you would like to add to the account.

PTA

The Montgomery Elementary Schools Parent-Teacher Association (MES PTA) is one PTA that serves both Orchard Hill and Village Elementary Schools. The PTA strives to work as a positive team that supports teachers, parents and, most of all, our students. Without your help we simply could not meet our goals. Your support of fundraisers, commitment of time, and donation of talents all come together to make a great year for all students. It is our goal to have every OHES family join the PTA and participate in our fabulous activities.

Information about the MES PTA, how to join, and student activities is sent home at the beginning of the school year and can also be found at the [MES PTA Webpage](#).

Student Safety

Fire Drills and Emergency Drills

The Montgomery Township School District has developed plans to deal with a variety of emergency situations. Fire drills will be conducted at least one (1) time per month . Lockdown and/or evacuation

drills will be conducted at least one (1) time per month during the school year. No one is permitted to enter the school during a drill. If you arrive to Village School during a drill, please wait outside until the drill is complete. Students, teachers, staff, and visitors are expected to take these drills seriously.

Threats of Violence or Violent Acts

In accordance with Board policy, threats are defined as attempting by physical menace or intimidation to put another in fear of imminent serious bodily injury, or threatening to commit any crime of violence with the purpose of terrorizing another. Examples of such threats would be (but are not limited to) threatening to “blow up a building” or to “kill” an individual.

All reported threats of violence will be investigated. All threats will be taken seriously and the proper authorities will be notified. Students found to be making threats may be subject to suspension/expulsion, evaluation by a psychiatrist, and police intervention.

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 or hallway lockers designed to hold his/her personal belongings during the school day.

Roller Sneakers

For safety reasons, students are not permitted to wear roller sneakers to school with the wheels installed.

Weapons

Board policy 8467 prohibits the possession, use, or exchange of any weapon in any school building, on school grounds, at any school sponsored event, and on school sanctioned transportation except as the possession and use of a weapon is authorized by law and required in the performance of the possessor's duty. Any student who possesses, uses, or exchanges a weapon in violation of this policy shall be subject to stringent discipline, which may include expulsion.

Affirmative Action

Mrs. Jaime Maccarone
Affirmative Action Coordinator
jmaccarone@mtsd.us

As per Board policy 2260, the Montgomery Township School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, mental or physical handicap, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, age or sex in any of its policies or regulations related to admissions, employment, financial aid, educational service, programs, or activities.

Board of Education Policies

The Montgomery Township School District policies can be located on our district website at www.mtsd.k12.nj.us Below are some specific policies:

P2260 Affirmative Action Program for School and Classroom Practices
P2361 Acceptable Use of Computer Networks/Computers and Resources
P2460 Special Education/Sending Districts
P5200 Attendance
P5330 Administration of Medication
P5331 Management of Life-Threatening Allergies in Schools
P5338 Diabetes Management
P5512 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying
P5516 Use of Electronic Communication Devices
P5519 Dating Violence at School
P5530 Substance Abuse
P5600 Pupil Discipline/Code of Conduct
P5615 Suspected Gang Activity
P5751 Sexual Harassment
P7441 Electronic Surveillance in School Buildings
P8601 Pupil Supervision After School Dismissal
P9713 Recruitment by Special Interest Groups

Policies can be located by selecting the "Board of Education" tab and select "Board of Education" policies on the drop down menu. Policies are listed numerically on the left side of the page. For those who do not have access to a computer, copies of the policies are available in the main office.