

Orchard Hill Elementary School



Student and Parent Handbook 2016-2017

About Us

Orchard Hill Elementary School is home to students in preschool through second grade. We are devoted to meeting the needs of primary age children and implementing learning experiences that will start all children on a successful learning path.

The teachers and staff ensure positive learning environments that promote and value discovery, academic success and parental involvement. Literacy, numeracy, inquiry and character education are the foundations of all learning at our school. Our differentiated approach to instruction includes large group, small group and individual conferring that promotes student growth in developmentally appropriate ways.

In line with the philosophy of Responsive Classroom we believe that social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community is paramount for optimal student learning.

To learn more about our school and staff, visit the OHES website. The links across the top of the page provide access to important information about the school district, our school, staff, PTA, parent information and our staff webpages.

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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

Ms. Christine Witt, President
Ms. Sandra M. Doonay
Mr. Dharmesh H. Doshi
Mr. Dale Huff

Mr. Charles F. Jacey, JR., Vice President
Mr. Nicholas Hladick
Mr. Richard T. Cavalli
Mrs. Amy Miller
Ms. Minkyo Chenette

Central Office Administration

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

Orchard Hill Elementary School

Contact Information Main Office

Orchard Hill Elementary School
244 Orchard Road
Skillman, New Jersey 08558
609-466-7605 (phone)
609-466-7690 (fax)

Mrs. Kathleen M. Scotti, Principal
kscotti@mtsd.us
Mrs. Karen L. Dudley, Assistant Principal
kdudley@mtsd.us

Mrs. Nora Kobylarz, Receptionist/Clerk
Ms. Patricia Chidylo, Secretary
Mrs. Denise Guaimano, Secretary

nkobylarz@mtsd.us , x1385
pchidylo@mtsd.us , x1365
dguaimano@mtsd.us , x1355

Health Office

Ms. Pamela Schrum, RN, CSN
Ms. Ann Messineo, RN
609-466-7605, Option 3 (phone)

pschrum@mtsd.us
amessineo@mtsd.us
609-466-7193 (fax)

School Anti-Bullying Contact Information

Mrs. Wendy Senatra
School Anti-Bullying Specialist
Orchard Hill Elementary School
609-466-7605
wsenatra@mtsd.us

Ms. Christine Buber
School Anti-Bullying Specialist
Orchard Hill Elementary School
609-466-7605
cbuber@mtsd.us

Guidance Office

Ms. Christine Buber
Mrs. Wendy Senatra

cbuber@mtsd.us x1078
wsenatra@mtsd.us x1007

Pupil Services Office

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

Child Study Team

Miriam Gordon, Psychologist
Jennifer Rogers, Social Worker
Debra Rothwell, Learning Consultant
Terry Ippolito, Secretary

mgordon@mtsd.us
jrogers@mtsd.us
drothwell@mtsd.us
tippolito@mtsd.us , x1005

Curriculum Supervisors

Mrs. Amy Monaco
Supervisor of Language Arts and Social Studies K-4

amonaco@mtsd.us

Mrs. Jessica Glover
Supervisor of Mathematics and Science K-4

jglover@mtsd.us

Mr. Adam Warshafsky
Supervisor of Visual and Performing Arts K-12

awarshafsky@mtsd.us

Ms. Alma Reyes
Supervisor of World Languages and ESL

areyes@mtsd.us

School Hours and Schedule

Regular Day

Grades 1 and 2	9:30-3:50
AM Kindergarten	9:30-12:10
PM Kindergarten	1:10-3:50
AM PreK	9:30-12:10
PM PreK	1:10-3:50

Emergency Dismissal (Snow Emergency, etc.)

Grades 1 and 2	9:30-1:30
AM Kindergarten	9:30-11:20
PM Kindergarten	Cancelled
AM PreK	9:30-11:20
PM PreK	Cancelled

Early Dismissal

Grades 1 and 2	9:30-1:30
AM Kindergarten	9:30-11:20
PM Kindergarten	11:50-1:30
AM PreK	9:30-11:20
PM PreK	11:50-1:30

Delayed Opening (Snow Emergency, etc.)

Grades 1 and 2	11:30-3:50
AM Kindergarten	11:30-1:30
PM Kindergarten	1:50-3:50
AM PreK	11:30-1:30
PM PreK	1:50-3:50

Six Day Cycle Schedule

Orchard Hill works on a 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 can be found on the Orchard Hill. Look for the “Parents” drop down menu and select “Six Day Cycle Schedule” or use this link <http://www.mtsd.k12.nj.us/Page/15160>.

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. Y Program, Recreation Department, GGS, 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 609-466-7605 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 school districts define "excused" and "unexcused" absences as:

- An **excused absence** is a student's absence from school for a full day or 4+ hours of a day for one or more of the following reasons
 - Personal illness (health care provider documentation)*On office script pad or stationary - Must include the diagnosis, duration of absences to be excused, and date of appointment.*
 - Professional appointments that cannot be scheduled during non-school hours (health care provider documentation),
 - Court appearance (court notice to appear),
 - Family illness or death,
 - New Jersey state approved religious holidays pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36:14,
 - Where appropriate, when consistent with Individualized Education Programs,
 - Suspension from school.
- An **unexcused absence** is a student's absence for all or part of a school day for any reason other than those listed above. Though a student may be absent with parental approval for reasons other than those listed above, the absence will be defined as verified but "unexcused". It is also recognized that the parents/guardians may not always take their child to the doctor every time he/she is sick. The district assumes that the "unexcused" absences will be used when it is necessary to miss school and documentation cannot be provided. "Unexcused" absences are not considered truancy unless the student is absent without parental consent.

To Report Your Child Absent

- **Before 9:00 am:** Call the District Attendance Hotline at 609-466-7610, Select option 2 and then option 2 again for Orchard Hill Elementary School.
- **Between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm:** Call Orchard Hill at 609-466-7605, 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.

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.

To Check Your Child’s Absences

You can log in to your Parent Resources account to check your child’s total absences. This is also where you will find letters from the school if your child reaches 4, 8, and 10+ cumulative unexcused absences or if your child has other absence patterns.

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

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.

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 Welcome Center in the main lobby 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 a 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 Welcome Center in the main lobby, and a staff member will call the classroom to have your child come to the main lobby. The parent will sign-out the student. 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. Photo identification must be provided to office staff prior to signing out and releasing student.

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 OHES 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.

Busing

Transportation Department

All students of Orchard Hill 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. Only students in PreK and Kindergarten will be brought back to the school if an adult is not at the bus stop at the end of the day.

Transportation Department

609-466-7601 x7010 or x7024

Robyn Friedlander, Supervisor of Transportation

rfriedlander@mtsd.us

Jesus (Chu) Velazquez, Assistant Supervisor of Transportation

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 . Eating food on the bus is not allowed.
- 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 Parent Pick-up

Drop-off

- **AM Kindergarten** Drop-off is the West Gym by the circle parking lot on Burnt Hill Road from 9:20 am to 9:30 am when staff is present.
- **PM Kindergarten** Drop-off is the West Gym by the circle parking lot on Burnt Hill Road from 1:10 pm to 1:15 pm when staff is present.
- **Grades 1 and 2** Drop-off is the East Gym by the main parking lot from 9:20 am to 9:30 am when staff is present. If you are the parent of multiple grade level students Please choose the drop off site that works best for your family. It is not expected that you drive to multiple sites to drop off your children.
- Cars are not permitted in the bus lanes in front of the school between 9:00 and 9:30 am as this creates a traffic and safety hazard for students during arrival.
- *Do not park in drop off lanes or fire lane lanes.*

Pick-up

- Parent Pick-up is on the **EAST SIDE ONLY** at 3:45 pm. For the safety of our students and staff, adults picking up may be asked to produce identification at any time. We recommend carrying a photo ID at all times. Parents/Guardians should enter the East gym from the doors near the parking lot, sign out his/her child(ren) and then exit out the front door on the East wing.
- All students require a dated note with parent/guardian signature. If an adult who is not listed as an emergency contact in Genesis is to pick up the child(ren), then he/she must be named in the note and will be asked to produce identification upon pick-up.
- Change in dismissal, after school activities, and parent pick up require a note from the parent or guardian. Please make sure to date all notes.
- **If signing out a child after 3:00 pm you must park in the main parking lot. Do not park in 10 minute spots or fire lane lanes.**
- **If you need to make a change in your child's dismissal plan during the day, please call the school at 609-466-7605 by 2:00 pm.**
- **If you send an email to your child's teacher about a change in dismissal plans, it is important to still call the school at 609-466-7605 to inform the main office by 2:00 pm.**
- AM Kindergarten and PreK pick-up - Please use the main entrance and pick your child up at the Welcome Center.

Visiting Orchard Hill

Procedures

- When visiting, please park in the large parking lot in the east and walk to the Main Entrance.
- All visitors need to sign in and out at the Welcome Center and enter and exit through the Main Entrance.
- All visitors will receive a name tag at the Welcome Center and must wear it while visiting Orchard Hill.
- The 10 minute parking in front of Orchard Hill is only for dropping off or picking up students or supplies after 9:30 am and before 3:00 pm. If you need a name tag, you need to park in the large parking lot in the east.
- **Please refrain from using the 10 minute parking after 3:00 pm since the bus lane is used by buses arriving for dismissal.**

Pupil Discipline/Code of Conduct

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 Orchard Hill, 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.

Bucket Fillers and High Fives

At Orchard Hill, the bucket fillers concept is used to help students understand how they can do more than expected, make others feel special, and have a good attitude. Students are taught that all they do everyday is either filling someone's bucket up or dipping into someone's bucket. Students are encouraged to look for ways to fill others' buckets each day. High fives are used to celebrate when a student fills someone's bucket.

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. Orchard Hill focuses on one pillar each month beginning with the Week of Respect in October.

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.

Orchard 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
- You break it; you fix it
- Loss of privilege
- Apology of action

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
- Apology of action
- 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 Kathleen M. Scotti at kscotti@mtsd.us.

Orchard Hill Anti-Bullying Specialists:
Wendy Senatra, wsenatra@mtsd.us
Christine Buber cbuber@mtsd.us

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

Lunch, Recess, and Snack

Lunch and Recess Behavior Expectations

Students in first and second grade have lunch in our cafeteria and recess on the playgrounds. During inclement weather, students may have indoor recess in their classrooms or in the cafeteria. Please remember to make sure your child has appropriate, supportive footwear for playing during recess. 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 Orchard Hill 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 aides, 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 at lunch and recess 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. 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 Orchard Hill website at <http://www.mtsd.k12.nj.us/Domain/579>, locate the "Info" dropdown menu,

and click on "Lunch Menus". Once there use the links to open up lunch menus or the letter with instructions for prepaid lunch accounts.

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.

Snack

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. Your classroom teacher will provide you with more specific information about snack in the classroom.

Personal Items

Lost and Found

The Lost and Found is located in the cafeteria in the corner to the left of the stage when looking at the stage. 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. 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

Ms. Pamela Schrum, RN, CSN pschrum@mtsd.us
Ms. Ann Messineo, RN amessineo@mtsd.us
609-466-7605, Option 3 (phone)
609-466-7193 (fax)

General Health Guidelines

Our school nurses are available to provide nursing services and emergency health care for students.

At OHES we have two school nurses. In order to maintain a healthy environment for all students, we request that you comply with the following guidelines to prevent your child from contracting an illness from another child and vice versa.

- If your child wakes up with fever or you suspect your child has a fever (temperature >100 degrees) please do not give them a fever reducing medication such as Tylenol or Motrin and then send him/her to school. Your child may have an illness that is contagious and remains contagious even after giving him/her a fever reducing medication. A sick child will not be a productive learner and s/he will be spreading his/her germs.
- Before returning to school a child must be fever free for 24 hours without the aid of a fever reducing medication. (Temperature < 100 degrees).
- If your child's illness involves vomiting and or diarrhea the child needs to be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- The best practice against the spread of germs is hand washing and keeping your hands away from your face. Continue to remind your child to wash his/her hands frequently especially after using the restroom, before eating, and after being in a public area. Also remind your child to keep his/her hands out of the mouth.
- If a student becomes sick during the school day and the nurse determines the student is too sick to return to class, the parent/guardian will be contacted to arrange for the student's transportation home.
- Head Lice: If you suspect your child has head lice, you must contact the school nurse immediately. During school hours if your child is found to have head lice s/he will be sent home. It is suggested you contact your child's physician for the appropriate treatment. A child may return to school once treated with an approved shampoo. The child must be cleared by the school nurse before returning to the classroom.
- Flu: As you may know, flu can be easily spread from person to person. *Plan for your child to be out for 3 to 5 days* if s/he has flu symptoms. Parents must provide a note upon their child's return to school stating:
 - o Time and date of last fever-reducing medication
 - o Time and date of last temperature check and temperature recorded
 - o A student may be asked to check in with the school nurse to verify that s/he are well enough to be in school.

Medication

The nurses at Orchard Hill handle all medication. Before any medication is administered by a school nurse, all of the following must take place:

- A note from parent/guardian giving permission for medication to be administered by the nurse and providing the correct dosage and time medication needs to be given
- All prescription medication must be in a labeled prescription container and over-the-counter medication must be in its original container.
- Parent/guardian **must** transport medication to/from school.
- Medications not picked up by the last day of school will be discarded.

Food Allergies

Food allergies can be life threatening and many Orchard Hill students suffer from severe and potentially life-threatening food allergies. The risk of accidental exposure to foods can be reduced in

the school setting when the school works with students, parents/guardian, medical personnel, and staff to provide a safe educational environment for food-allergic students.

Please keep in mind if your child is placed in a class with food allergies there are basic safety precautions that will minimize a student's chances of an accidental exposure. Please keep an open line of communication with your child's teacher regarding the foods that may not be allowed.

If your child has a life-threatening food allergy please contact the school nurse as soon as possible to discuss the allergy and obtain the necessary medical paperwork.

Sleep

Homework, dinner, and bedtime routines most likely occupy your afternoon and evenings when school lets out for the day. However, it is what is happening at night, during your child's sleeping hours, which can greatly impact how s/he is able to perform or function during his/her daily tasks. Sleep is especially important for children as it directly impacts mental and physical development.

- Children aged five to twelve need 10-11 hours of sleep.
- Watching TV and other digital media close to bedtime has been associated with bedtime resistance, difficulty falling asleep, anxiety around sleep, and sleeping fewer hours.
- Sleep deprivation impacts health, academic performance, and behavior.
- Increased total sleep, earlier bedtimes, and later weekday rise times are associated with better grades in school.
- Sleep deprivation may present itself in many ways other than daytime sleepiness -- inattention, poor concentration, moodiness, behavioral problems, and poor academic performance and social skills.

Guidance Office

Ms. Christine Buber cbuber@mtsd.us x1078
Mrs. Wendy Senatra wsenatra@mtsd.us x1007

The guidance counselors at Orchard Hill 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 at Orchard Hill 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.

Additionally, they serve as resources to parents and families to ensure every student experiences both 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.

The guidance counselors are assigned to specific grade levels and follow students to each new grade level while the students are at Orchard Hill. One of our guidance counselors also works at VES as

well and serves as a transition guidance counselor between the two elementary schools; thus providing a familiar face for students when they first arrive at Village Elementary School in third grade.

Academic Program

Language Arts

Literacy at Orchard Hill supports students as they learn to read and write with increasing skill and fluency. Students enjoy showcasing their literary knowledge through discussions with peers and teachers during whole-class direct instruction, individual conferences, and small group instruction. The standards-based curriculum focuses on reading and analyzing literature and informational text, writing, foundational skills, and speaking and listening. Daily instruction is organized in a workshop structure where students engage in authentic reading and writing while the teachers take on the role of mentors and coaches. Additionally, teachers engage students in interactive read alouds, shared reading, guided reading, and interactive writing, during which students are exposed to both complex text and books that correlate with their independent and instructional levels.

Mathematics

Mathematics at Orchard Hill focuses on building connections between number concepts, geometric relationships and a range of problem solving skills. Beyond the ability to calculate, students learn to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to measurement and data analysis tasks. Students learn to make sense of mathematics and communicate their understandings to others. Daily instruction is organized using a variety of structures to maximize differentiation to meet the learning needs of all students.

Science

Students are provided with a variety of opportunities to think and work as scientists throughout the year with a focus on fostering curiosity and wonder, inquiry and discovery, and a passion for learning and understanding. Students engage with hands-on explorations and activities with authentic built-in problem-solving and inquiry across the life, physical, and earth sciences. They also have opportunities to apply their mathematical, reading, and writing skills within these content areas.

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. 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

Orchard Hill seeks to provide students with a wide variety of educational opportunities. In Kindergarten, students receive health and physical education, art, music, and library. In first and

second grade students receive health and physical education, art, music, technology, library, and Spanish. 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 Orchard Hill.

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.

Differentiation Model

Our elementary differentiation model provides all students with academic challenges within the regular classroom setting in mathematics and language arts. The students are clustered together in small groups with students of similar ability.

Teachers differentiate mathematics instruction regularly, and will do so for the all students in their classes. In language arts, the students are grouped flexibly and based on reading/writing levels.

This differentiation 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.

Email 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 Night

Every year, we hold Back to School Nights for each grade level. Please visit the OHES website for dates and times for PreK-2nd grade nights.

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 at mid-year and end of year. Parent-Teacher Conferences are held in the fall and spring. Below are the specific dates for these events:

Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences	November (Early Dismissal schedule for students)
Mid-year Report Cards	Late January - Early February
Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences	April (Early Dismissal schedule for students)
End of Year Report Cards	June

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 Orchard Hill 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 just cannot meet our goals. Your support of fundraisers, your commitment of time, and your 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 <http://www.mtsd.k12.nj.us/domain/441>. The MES PTA also has a weekly email that you can sign up for as well.

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 Orchard Hill 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.

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.

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.

Affirmative Action

Mary E. McLoughlin
1014 Route 601
Skillman, NJ 08558
mmcloughlin@mtsd.us
(609) 466-7600 Ext. 7233

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
P5511 Dress and Grooming
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. Always check the MTSD website for the latest policy updates.