



Watchung School Family Handbook

2022-23

14 Garden Street, Montclair, NJ 07042

School Office Hours: 8:00-3:30

Phone: 973-509-4259

Web: www.montclair.k12.nj.us

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Staff Roster 2022-23

Patrick Krenn – Principal
Judith Thompson – Head Secretary
Audrey Pelham – Secretary

Kindergarten Teachers

Dione Olson
Randi Schott

Laurent Pepe

First Grade Teachers

Abby Ernst
Marissa Donovan

Caitlin Donohue

Second Grade Teachers

Melissa Totaro
Allison Tilley
(LTS Dr. Lisa Rollins)
Robert Fantozzi

Third Grade Teachers

Jamie Bassett
Christina Sparacino
Lauren Kline

Fourth Grade Teachers

Christen Berman
Valarie Hampton
Alex Patrizio

Fifth Grade Teachers

Sue Wolff
Sun-Hee Sul
Ricky Burrell

Special Education Teachers

Susan Bleecker
Carolyn Jochem
Colleen Markham
Katie Piller
Gina Russo
Lyndsay Byron
Michelle Ro
Brittany Kramer
Lindsay Bura
Amanda Siragusa

Related Arts Teachers

Drury Thorp - STEAM
Eric "Coach" Weintraub - PE
Karma Cloud - Art
Lucia Fernandez-Melhuish - Art
Ravan Magrath – Technology
Carol Yeh– Mandarin
Dr. Boyce Ennis – Music Teacher

Child Study Team

Tiffany Buffa – LDTC
Sharon Labate – Psychologist
Alfaljiri Wesley – Social Worker

Curriculum Support Teachers

Grace Ko – K-2
Stacy Panila – 3-5

Support Services

Majorie McShane - Nurse
Debra Polizzano – Social Worker
Janice Fowler- Speech Therapist
June Rose – Speech Therapist
Erika Heggins – Physical Therapist
Sue Hand – Occupational Therapist

Paraprofessionals

Diane Depalma
Sue Corino
Tab Cox
Lorna Giron
Aiden Burnett
Cathy Weber
Kelly Tencza
Deneen Jackson

Sabrina Pearman
Yvonne Flora-Butts
Justin Rivera
Denzel Thompson
Moses Lewis
Shirley Simmons
Giselle Aguilar
Jaia Johnson-Walker

Custodians

Morris Sancillio – Head Custodian
Wade Stokes - Custodian
Michael Amezquita

About Watchung

Watchung School serves close to 400 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Watchung School has a long tradition of excellence serving a highly diverse population of students. To best prepare our students for these ever-evolving times, Watchung School integrates its curricula with the methods of problem-based learning. The science curriculum offers hands-on activities including weekly lessons in a state-of-the-art STEAM lab and greenhouse. The Watchung Greenhouse has a Hydroponics system, which is a powerful addition to our magnet theme. Students learn about this process of growing plants without soil, which is environmentally friendly and increasingly important to our sustainability. The core curriculum at Watchung School infuses problem-based learning activities at all grade levels to ensure students are learning to think critically and be problem solvers.

Vision Statement

Watchung School students will graduate equipped with skills to be independent life-long learners. Students will demonstrate compassion for others and their environment through an understanding about the interdependence of all living things. Students will be critical thinkers, problem solvers and curious about how things work.

Watchung School Core Values

Be a Problem Solver

- We are curious.
- We are critical thinkers.
- We are risk takers.

Be Respectful

- We are compassionate.
- We are listeners.
- We are accountable.

Be Independent

- We are passionate about our interests/talents.
- We are developing the skills needed to obtain our goals.
- We strive to be life-long learners.

OVERARCHING GOALS:

- Ensure students are able to develop the skills necessary to achieve grade level standards
- Cultivate an equitable, welcoming, safe, healthy and inclusive school community where students will embody positive character traits within the school setting and the community at large
- Engage all students to establish and achieve personal goals
- Establish effective communication, engagement and involvement of students and families

Communication

The following methods allow Watchung administrators and staff to communicate effectively with families and provide information about classroom and school events!

- **Genesis-Parent Access** – Parent Access is a component of Genesis — our student information system. It allows us to provide you with a safe and secure way to view academic information about your children in one portal via the Internet. ALL parents and guardians must maintain up to date profile information. Please visit our district website to explore further.
(<https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/cms/one.aspx?pageId=5147463>)
- **Watchung Weekly Newsletter**— An email will be e-blasted out to families once a week , which contains information regarding upcoming student activities, school/district events and PTA updates.
- **Watchung School’s Website**—School related and district information can be located on our site, which is updated regularly. Please visit <https://watchung.montclair.k12.nj.us/>
- **Email “Blasts”**—We are a “Go Green” school, so please check your email for the updates from the school.
- **Formal Teacher Conferences** — There are both afternoon and evening conference times available to you—the dates are listed on our master calendar.
- **Informal Teacher Conferences**—The faculty at Watchung is committed to working with you to help your child succeed. Please call or send an email to discuss any questions or concerns. Please do not “pop-in” to chat with your child’s teacher or approach the teacher at drop-off. They are anxious to help you but are busy working with children and will reach out to you as soon as they are free.
- **Automated Attendance Messages**—You will receive an automated call from the district system when your child is late and/or absent. These calls are made regardless of notes from home explaining the tardiness or the absence.
- **Meeting with the Principal**—*Parents should always refer to the classroom teacher prior to contacting building administration. Classroom teachers know your child best and will have first-hand knowledge.* However, if you have a concern or suggestion that needs the attention of the principal, please send a note, email, or call the office. Appointments can be made through the school secretary—please be specific about the appointment request so that the principal can be best prepared to address your concerns.

School Day

- Please make sure that your child arrives on time (the first bell rings at 8:50am; classroom instruction begins promptly at 9:00 am).
- Supervision begins at 8:40am on the blacktop area only.
- Students cannot play on the playground before or after school without parent or caregiver supervision.
- Please make sure that you pick your child up on time from school (3:05pm) or at the scheduled bus stop.

School Hours

8:50am	First bell rings—school day begins
9:00am	Late bell (Children who are late must report to the office)
9:10am	First period bell rings and instruction
3:05pm	Dismissal of all students

Early Dismissal/Abbreviated Days

Early dismissal at Watchung School is at 1:40 pm. Please make the necessary arrangements to pick your child up on time. The YMCA After-Care program is in operation on these days for enrolled families.

School Closings and Delayed Openings

In the event of inclement weather, the Superintendent may elect to call for a 2-hour delayed school opening or close the schools for a full day. The district's automated system will place calls to inform families of the decision. Information regarding any school closings or delayed openings will be posted on the district's website or can be obtained by calling the district main office, (973) 509-4000 to hear a recorded message with school closing information. Some TV and radio stations as well as the websites for the Montclair PTA and Montclair Township may also carry this information.

In the event of a delayed opening, schools will admit students two hours after the normal opening time (10:40 am). Students should report to their regular bus stop two hours after the normal time; riders should be prepared for delays due to poor road conditions and increased traffic. Once schools are in session, students will complete the school day as usual. Lunch will be served on delayed opening days.

The Daily Schedule

There are eight periods per day. Most of these periods each day are spent with basic (academic) teachers for instruction in the core subjects (English language arts; math; science; and social studies). The remaining periods each day are used for their lunch/recess period and one or two related art classes. The academic year is divided into 3 cycles. Both basic academic classes and related arts classes will remain consistent throughout the school year.

CORE Academic Teacher Assignments

CORE classes refer to English language arts (ELA), math, science, and social studies. In Kindergarten through Third Grade, students are assigned to one teacher who delivers all of their core

instruction. In grades four and five, students rotate through 3 different teachers (ELA teacher, Math teacher, & SS/Science teacher).

- IN-CLASS SUPPORT (ICS) teacher is responsible for servicing students with individualized education plans.
- Curriculum Support teacher is responsible for small group instruction.

Bell Schedule

<u>Period</u>	<u>Regular Day</u>	<u>Abbreviated Day</u>	<u>Delayed Opening</u>
HR/Morning Meet	8:50-9:10	8:50-9:10	10:40-11:00
1	9:10-9:50	9:10-9:40	11:00-11:24
2	9:50-10:30	9:40-10:10	11:24-12:04
3	10:30-11:10	10:10-10:40	12:04-12:44
4	11:10-12:00	10:40-11:20	12:44-1:24
5	12:00-12:50	11:20-12:00	1:24-1:48
6	12:50-1:40	12:00-12:40	1:48-2:12
7	1:40-2:20	12:40-1:10	2:12-2:36
8	2:20-3:00	1:10-1:40	2:36-3:00
Dismissal	3:00-3:10	1:40-1:50	3:00-3:10

Academics

Watchung implements the same Basic Subject Matter curriculum for Kindergarten through 5th grade students as all other Montclair Public Schools. Our curriculum is driven by the [New Jersey Student Learning Standards](#). Teachers develop lessons from district curriculum to ensure effective learning opportunities for our students. Our basic curriculum includes language arts literacy, math, science and social science.

English Language Arts (ELA)

With our curriculum, we will build a strong foundation in literacy for our children. With a balanced literacy approach, we incorporate guided reading, shared reading, independent reading, interactive read aloud, and word study into our language arts block. Our district has adopted the Center for the *Collaborative Classroom (CCC)* program to help children develop their literacy skills with *Making Meaning and Being a Writer* components of the program.

Students' reading levels are assessed four times a year using the research-based *Renaissance Learning Program* and in some cases the *Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2)*. These assessment tools enable teachers to identify students' reading achievement, document progress, and modify teaching methods to plan and implement instruction.

*Montclair Public Schools - English Language Arts Curriculum, Grades 3-5
<https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=889560&pageId=1109875>

Mathematics

The MPS has adopted and implement a new math program. The Go Math! program will serve as our new teaching resource this year. Math instruction is always evolving, with new approaches to pedagogy, engagement, and technology. *GO Math!*[®] meets students and teachers on their math journey, raising student achievement scores and supporting teachers along the way.

Designed by the same author team across K–8, *GO Math!* incorporates the latest thinking in its comprehensive approach and engages digital natives with cross-platform technology. It helps teachers to differentiate instruction, building and reinforcing foundational math skills that translate from the classroom to real life.

*Montclair Public Schools - Mathematics Curriculum, Grades 3-5
<https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=889560&pageId=1110287>

Science

Our district will continue with the implementation of the The Full Option Science System - FOSS Program. This science program bridges research and practice by providing tools and strategies to engage students and teachers in enduring experiences that lead to deeper understanding of the natural and designed worlds. Science creates an awareness and understanding of our natural and designated environment and our place in it. Curiosity and enthusiasm must be nurtured and encouraged in such a way that a child's innate interest in the wonders of natural phenomena is enhanced and his or her reasoning and problem-solving skills promoted. Students should be engaged in explorations through frequent applied learning and inquiry-based programs. Many experiences should be provided for the child to perform real-life and relevant investigations.

*Montclair Public Schools - Science Curriculum, Grades 3-5

<https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=889560&pageId=1110563>

Social Studies

The administration, faculty, and staff of Montclair Public Schools, in cooperation with parents and the community, and with active participation of the students, are committed to viewing each other as individuals, respecting each person's uniqueness, and setting high expectations for all students. Our learning environment will be conducive to the acquisition of knowledge, as well as to the development of problem solving, critical thinking, and organizational skills. Through an interdisciplinary approach, we will aid our students in developing responsible behavior, a positive attitude toward themselves and others, and the necessary life skills to become productive citizens in our changing society.

*Montclair Public Schools - Social Studies Curriculum, Grades 3-5

<https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=889560&pageId=1110733>

Homework

Homework is given to reinforce skills taught in school as well as to teach students responsibility for their learning. As per [District Policy: 2230 – Homework](#), the Board of Education believes that homework “provides an opportunity to broaden, deepen and reinforce the pupil's knowledge”. The amount and type of homework will vary and increases as students' progress through grade levels. We also strongly encourage that every child reads at home daily. Children can enjoy listening to you read aloud; they can read to you and they should read independently. Teachers will review their expectations for homework at the Annual Back-to-School Night. Please contact your child's teacher if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's homework.

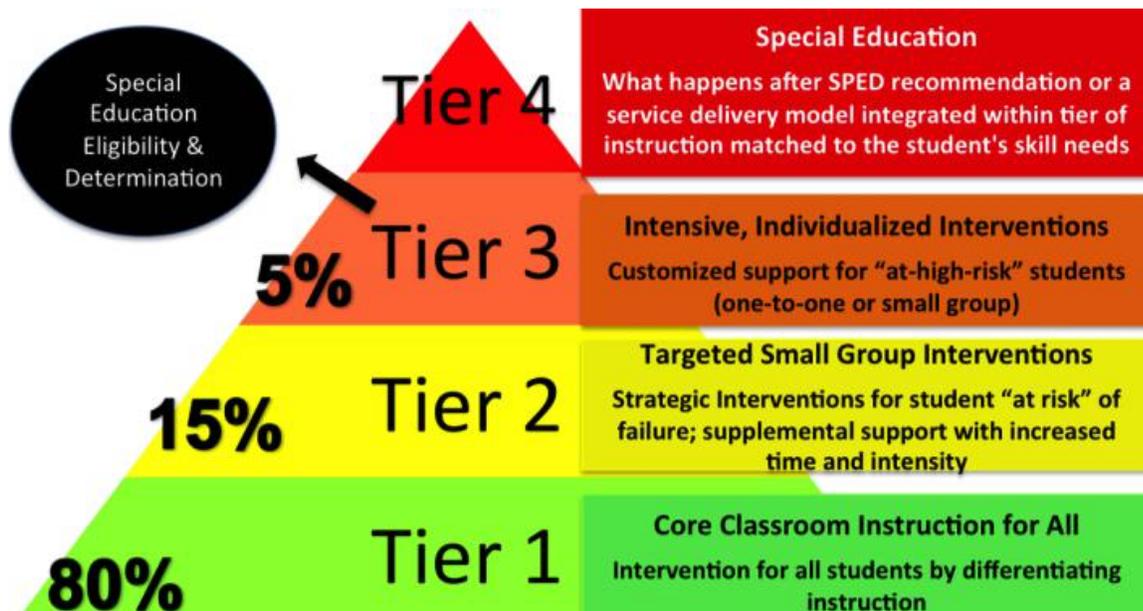
Report Cards

Report cards are completed three times during the school year. Report cards are standardized across the district for third, fourth, and fifth grades. The numbers and letters used for the keys (developmental/behavioral) should not be viewed as grades. There is no relationship between those numbers and letters, and numerical or letter grades. The report card reflects our efforts to give you an accurate and on-going assessment of your child's academic, social, and emotional progress. Report cards will be visible in Parent Access.

Support Programs

As with any learning context, there are times when students require additional time and reinforcements in order to be successful academically, socially and/or emotionally. Such programs to support students are available to children at Watchung, as in all schools throughout the district. As partners in the education community, parents and guardians are consulted and informed during each phase of the process. We aim to partner with families as we seek to facilitate student growth and positive academic experiences.

Response to Intervention (RtI)



Academic support is offered to students who are not on benchmark levels throughout the school year in English language arts and math. Teachers assist children regularly as part of their differentiated instruction. **Response to Intervention (RTI)** is an approach to academic and behavioral intervention used to provide early, systematic, and appropriately intensive assistance to children who are at risk for or already underperforming as compared to appropriate grade- or age-level standards. The paradigm above illustrates the whole-school organization for each Tier.

Tier I instruction is focused specifically within the core curriculum, with daily lessons and interventions targeting all students. Approximately 80% to 85% of the general student body should be able to meet grade level norms without additional assistance beyond the first tier. During the designated daily RTI period in one's schedule, Tier I students participate in flexible instruction, typically in the form of center-based learning. During this period, there are a variety of activities available for students, which are directly connected to our ELA, Math, S.S., and Science curriculum. All work is differentiated based upon student needs and abilities. Typical center activities include pre-planned enrichment activities, extension projects, problem solving work, curriculum games, Individualized Daily Reading (IDR), etc.

Tier II intervention occurs when a child does not respond to Tier I instruction that is delivered in the basic academic classroom. If that is the case, then the classroom teacher will provide additional targeted instruction throughout an intervention cycle. This Tier II instruction occurs in addition to regular instruction and takes place three to four times a week. Tier II instruction takes place during the daily RTI period and during ELA & Math aesthetic support courses. Your child’s teacher will communicate specific supports to you directly.

Tier III instruction, which is provided by a curriculum support teacher, is available to youngsters who need even more frequent help in a particular intervention cycle and is in addition to regular classroom instruction. Parents/Caregivers of students who need Tier III supports will be invited to an Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) meeting.

*Students who are not on benchmark levels will automatically be scheduled for Tier II and Tier III interventions and aesthetic support courses. All parents/caregivers will be notified and included in the development of an intervention action plan.

Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) and Section 504

“Interventions in the general education setting shall be provided to students exhibiting academic difficulties and shall be utilized as appropriate, prior to referring a student for an evaluation of eligibility for special education and related services (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3).”

The **I&RS** process must begin with a Pre-Referral Plan as developed and implemented by the teacher, school counselor or administrator who has identified a child who is experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties. The Pre-Referral Plan must include Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant and Timely (SMART) Goals and corresponding data. It should be noted that programs of Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) may not be used to delay obvious and appropriate referrals to special education (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3). A building-based program of intervention and referral services is not necessarily a pre-referral intervention mechanism for CST evaluations. An I&RS team is one of many resources used by schools to intervene with students exhibiting educationally handicapping condition prior to CST evaluations. The Pre-Referral Plan as developed and implemented by the teacher, school counselor or administrator may serve as a source of data-driven evidence of interventions.

Section 504 is a Civil Rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Section 504 ensures that students with medical or other disabilities have equal access to an education. Qualified students may receive accommodations and modifications planned by persons knowledgeable about the students, the meanings of evaluation data, and placement and accommodation options. Information and resources regarding the district’s 504 procedures can be found in the [MPS Section 504 Handbook](#).

Montclair School District Gifted & Talented Program

Montclair Public Schools recognize that rather than any single gifted program, a continuum of programming services must exist for gifted learners as an integral part of differentiated classroom instruction. The district strives to provide an ongoing educational program that identifies, develops, and expands the gifts and talents of our students while monitoring the value and impact of services provided.

Special Education Programming and The Child Study Team

The Child Study Team determines pupil eligibility for Special Education and related services in accordance with federal and state requirements under the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and N.J.A.C. 6A:14.

Speech Therapy

The speech therapist provides services to children for articulation and language development. Sessions occur according to the student's needs.

Auditory Support Therapy

A specialist provides support services to hearing-impaired students who are in regular classrooms. The therapist meets with identified children according to the students' needs.

Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy

A certified occupational therapist and/or physical therapist works with classified students on fine motor development or other needs as identified through evaluation.

School Counselor

A full-time counselor is available to provide assistance to children when they need emotional support. Students have a safe place in which to process feelings and talk. A student may see the counselor once about a particular incident or may meet over a longer period of time depending on the child's needs. When long-term counseling becomes necessary, parents are notified for their input and consent. The counselor's goal is to establish a positive relationship with youngsters and their homes so that students can be supported to have a wonderful school experience. The counselor also conducts lessons on social skills, in classrooms, as a proactive measure toward building a kind, safe and respectful school community. Please inform the school of changes within the family, environment, or other significant factors that may affect your child's physical and emotional health.

School Nurse

The school nurse is on duty full time. Parents will receive either a call from the nurse and/or a note in the child's backpack to confirm a visit to the nurse. Parents or an emergency contact are also notified when a child becomes ill during the school day. According to Montclair Board of Education policy, there are specific instances such as an elevated temperature, vomiting and skin rashes that require children to be excluded from school. A child may also be excluded based on the clinical assessment of the nurse.

* Please note according to district policy, the school nurse does not administer any herbal, homeopathic, or dietary supplements.

* Please see additional helpful information from the Health Office under the section entitled Health and Wellness.

Attendance

In order for the board of education to fulfill its responsibility for providing a thorough and efficient education for each pupil, the complete cooperation of parents/guardians and pupils is required to maintain a high level of school attendance. The frequent absence of pupils from classroom learning experiences disrupts the continuity of the instructional process and limits the ability of pupils to complete the prescribed curriculum requirements successfully. A pupil must not be absent more than 10 days per cycle in order to be considered to have successfully completed the instructional program requirements of the grade/course to which he/she/they are assigned. The board will report infractions of the law regarding the attendance of pupils below the age of 16 to appropriate authorities.

[MPS District Policy: 5200 Student Attendance](#) – Attendance letters, phone calls, meeting with school counselor/administration, and notification to the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) will take place when we have a concern regarding a student’s attendance.

Calling out an Absence

Parents/guardians are requested to notify the school early in the day when a child will be absent and informing the school of the reason for the absence. Automatic attendance calls will be made daily at 9:20am. **Please make sure that the school has a working phone number for contact; maintain accurate information in Genesis – Parent Access.**

<https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/cms/one.aspx?pageId=5147463>

Tardy to School

Students are expected to be in school on time. Late arrivals slow down not only your student’s learning, but also interrupt the rest of the class—and the teacher. The first bell rings at 8:40am. Students have from 9:40am-9:00 am to put away their coats, backpacks, etc. and be ready to start the instructional day promptly at 9:00 am. Students who arrive to school after 9:00 am are marked tardy. **After 9:00 am, students must report to the office to be signed in and receive a late pass.** A conference with the parent and the principal will be required for students with excessive tardiness.

Signing Students Out Before the End of the School Day

The board recognizes that from time-to-time compelling circumstances will require that a pupil be dismissed before the end of the school day. There are varying situations that may justify release of a student from school before the normal time for closing. Such situations are justifiable only if the release does not jeopardize the pupil’s educational program.

Notification of an early dismissal must be made in writing in advance by the student's parent/guardian and should state the reason for an early release from school. No student shall be permitted to leave the school before the close of the school day unless they are met in the school office by their parent/guardian or a person authorized by the parent/guardian.

Students will not be called out of class after 2:45 pm—this is too close to dismissal and causes confusion for the classrooms. It is important that students are getting home safely, and last-minute changes make supervision more difficult.

Transferring to a New School Out of the District

Please notify the school office as soon as you are aware your child will be transferring to another school outside of the district. A Student Transfer Card will be completed in Genesis (name and address of new school is needed to complete the card). Once the principal signs the card, it will be returned to you to present to your child's new school upon registration. This card authorizes the new school to request your child's records.

Arrival and Dismissal

Changes to Dismissal

Changes in dismissal must be in writing to the classroom teacher. **Please do not call the office to change dismissal arrangements unless it is an emergency.** Plan and send a note to the teacher in advance. Calling into the classrooms to announce changes disrupts everyone's instruction and can lead to confusion for the children at the end of the day.

General Drop-off/Pick-up Rules

At no time are parents permitted to enter the staff parking lot with their cars between the times of 8:00am – 4:00pm. We have had way too many close calls with students and moving vehicles. Your vehicle will be towed. Each parking spot in the STAFF ONLY PARKING LOT is assigned to an employee.

Arrival Procedures (Arrival - Full-day 8:40am; Delayed Opening 10:40am)

Watchung students are to be dropped off on the south side of Garden street directly in front of the building. Garden Street is a DROP & GO area – parents should not get out of their vehicles.

STAFF MEMBERS ARE NOT ON-DUTY AND DO NOT ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY UNTIL 8:40AM

Dismissal Procedures (Dismissal - Full-day 3:05pm; Abbreviated Day 1:40pm)

Bussers – If you designate your child as a **BUSSER**, they will meet in the auditorium and wait to be called outside when their bus arrives* More information outlined below.

Walkers – All parents/caregivers are required to complete the Policy 8601 - Request for Supervision at Dismissal from School Form.

If you designate your child as a **WALKER**, then they will be escorted to a designated pick-up area by their homeroom teacher. Your child is NOT allowed to run off to find you, you must locate the teacher and receive your child from the homeroom teacher's care.

If a child is not picked up by 3:15 pm, then they will be brought to the main office for pick-up.

Other After-school Dismissal Options (when enrolled and/or invited):

- 1) PTA After School Enrichment Programs ~ Explorers & Pop-Up Workshops

YMCA Before & After School Care Program

Before and after school care is available at Watchung for students of parents desiring this service. This program is sponsored by the Montclair YMCA not Hillside School. **DROP-OFF and Pick Up is at the North Fullerton Street entrance (across from the playground).

Contact: Lisa Aulisi at the Montclair YMCA (973-744-3400) for more information.

Bus Riders

Children who are eligible for transportation through the Board of Education will be dismissed to their assigned bus at 3:05pm. Students should be picked up on time at their bus stop. **Check Genesis – Parent Access for Bus Routes**

If a student is not picked up at their bus stop on a regular basis, he/she/they will be suspended from taking the bus.

Changes in dismissal must be in writing by a parent/guardian. If a note is not received from a parent/guardian indicating the student should not take the bus, the student will be put on the bus at dismissal. ONLY students assigned to the bus are allowed to ride the bus. Students are not allowed to bring a friend who is not assigned that bus.

Please address your questions and/or concerns to our Transportation Department Supervisor Kevin Palmer (973) 509 – 4055 or kpalmer@montclair.k12.nj.us

Bus Rules and Consequences

A pupil may be excluded from the bus for disciplinary reasons by the administration and his/her parents shall provide for his/her transportation to and from school during the period of such exclusion.

- **First Offense** – The student will be reported to the school administration. A notation will be made in Genesis and a letter will be sent to the student's parents informing them of the problem as well as what procedure will be followed if a second or third offense occurs during the school year.
- **Second Offense** – The student will be excluded from the bus for a period of five (5) school days and his/her parents shall provide transportation to and from school during that period. Absence from school during this period will be considered truancy.
- **Third Offense** – The student will be excluded from the bus for a period of thirty (30) school days and his/her parents shall provide transportation to and from school during that period. Absence from school during this period will be considered truancy. Any further infractions will be subject to an additional thirty (30) school days suspension of bus privileges. Suspension will be carried from year to year.

Additional Guidelines and Procedures

All-Gender Restrooms

For the 18-19 school year and beyond, the district created all-gender restrooms for students. An all-gender restroom, or gender-neutral restroom, is a restroom that anyone of any gender or non-gender can use. These restrooms can benefit many different people including families, differently abled persons, and transgender people. Historically, restrooms have been a place for harassment, discrimination, and threats of injury and assault towards transgender people. All-gender restrooms provide an opportunity for our community members to enter a room without being questioned or interrogated. Given the age of our school buildings, some all-gender restrooms will be multiple-stall or single-stall restrooms and may be in different locations in the building. Our all-gender restrooms will be properly labeled, and our schools' all-gender restrooms will be located on the ground floor near the cafeteria. Students will be permitted to use either the gender-neutral bathroom and/or the bathroom of their identified gender. Parents and caregivers, please note the all-gender restroom at Hillside is a single use restroom to ensure privacy for all.

Birthday Celebrations

In accordance with the [MPS – Food Regulations](#): No food is allowed for birthday parties or other student celebrations, or used as student rewards. Please see the full MPS – Food Guidelines outlined below. Also, please note that birthday party invitations cannot be distributed in school unless each child from the class is being invited.

Custody/Court Related Matters

We are so ordered to uphold court documentation that has been issued to the MPS. Please supply the Registrar Office and our Main Office with any necessary legal documentation that needs to be upheld.

Dogs

Dogs are NOT allowed on school property.

Dress Code

In accordance with [District Policy: 5511 – Dress and Grooming](#), Hillside School asks parents to consider their children's safety and comfort when selecting school clothes. Play clothes are recommended, including sneakers or other rubber-soled shoes. Please avoid flip-flops, crocs, and other backless shoes. Keep in mind your child's physical education class schedule in selecting the day's attire.

Emergency Contact Information

It is critical that you provide us with a working phone number so that we may reach you in the event of an emergency. You must keep emergency contact information updated regularly. Please login to [Genesis – Parent Access](#) to update your profile information. Please email question or concerns to parentaccess@montclair.k12.nj.us.

Field Trips

Part of the Watchung experience is to provide enrichment through field trips. A few weeks before a class field trip, parents will receive a permission slip and notice of any admission or bus fees. Lunches from home must be packed in a paper bag marked with the child's name (no lunch boxes) and may not include a thermos, soda cans or glass bottles. Parents chaperoning on field trips are

not allowed to bring siblings and/or other family members. Students who qualify for free/reduced lunch are exempt from all costs.

Montclair Public Schools - Food Regulations

- No food may be sold for fundraising **during school lunchtime**.
- Food sold for fundraising **during school hours (other than lunchtime)** must be tree nut free and peanut free with all ingredients clearly labeled and **must follow USDA Smart Snack Guidelines** (see below).
- Food sold for fundraising **before and after school hours** must be tree nut and peanut free with all ingredients clearly labeled. This includes PTA and Booster Club fundraisers.
- No food is allowed for birthday parties or other individual student celebrations, or used as student rewards, with the exception of food rewards designated in individual student's IEP's which must be tree nut and peanut free.
- Food may be used as instructional material in science labs, family and consumer science classes, and classes where course lesson plans contain a food-specific educational component. All food used as instructional material must be tree nut and peanut free.
- Food served at any classroom or all-school festivity must be tree nut free and peanut free with all ingredients clearly labeled. If any food does not have all ingredients clearly labeled, it cannot be served. These rules also apply to evening and weekend functions. Parents/guardians must be given a five-day notice of any event serving food.
- All classrooms must be tree nut and peanut aware. Other life-threatening food allergens will be restricted on a class-by-class basis as deemed necessary by the school nurse. Tree nuts and peanuts must be consumed only in the cafeteria during lunchtime. All K-5 schools will have a designated tree nut free and peanut free table in the cafeteria or outside picnic area. Middle and high schools will have a designated tree nut free and peanut free table in the cafeteria or outside picnic area only upon parent request.
- Breakfast Program may be consumed in the classroom by students within 10 minutes of arrival to school.
- Snacks in the classroom may be eaten only during a snack time designated by the teacher or administrator.
All snacks must be tree nut and peanut free.
- No food may be consumed on K-12 school buses with the exception of students with diabetes who require an emergency snack. They may consume a tree nut free and peanut free snack at a seat in the front of the bus. Buses for field trips and athletic events must be tree nut free and peanut free.
- All school trips must consider the needs of students with food allergies. For example, a class may not go apple picking if a student in the class is allergic to apples. It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure all students are accommodated.

USDA Smart Snack Standards

Grain products must contain 50 percent or more whole grains by weight (have a whole grain as the first ingredient); Non-grain products have fruit, vegetable, dairy product, or protein food listed as the first ingredient.

The food must meet the following nutrient standards for calories, sodium, sugar, and fats:

Nutrient	Snack
Calories	200 calories or less
Sodium	200 mg or less
Total Fat	35% of calories or less
Saturated Fat	Less than 10% of calories
Trans Fat	0 g
Sugar	35% by weight or less

USDA Smart Snack Beverages

Beverage	Amount
Water: Plain (with or without carbonation)	No Limit
Milk: Unflavored low-fat, unflavored or flavored fat-free; milk alternatives	Elementary School 8 fl oz Middle School and High School 12 fl oz
Juice: 100% fruit or vegetable juice (with or without carbonation)	Elementary School 8 fl oz Middle School and High School 12 fl oz

Lost and Found

WRITE YOUR CHILD’S FIRST AND LAST NAME ON THEIR BELONGINGS. However, if that does not prove to be successful, we have Lost & Found containers located outside the cafeteria. Items that children have misplaced are placed in the containers. You and your children are welcome to check the containers for lost items.

PLEASE NOTE: The Montclair Board of Education will not be responsible for cell phones, iPods, and/or other items that are brought to school and are lost or stolen.

Food Services

Students may either bring a lunch from home or purchase a lunch at school. All students eat in the cafeteria.

The Montclair Public Schools participates in the National School Lunch Program, which is funded with Federal grant monies. We provide the five components of a complete lunch as required by the USDA. These components are meat/protein alternative, bread/grain, vegetable, fruit and milk. To obtain a full, reduced or free lunch at the listed price, the lunch must include at least three of the five components. One of the three components taken must be a ½ cup of fruit and/or vegetable to be considered a full lunch. If a complete lunch is not purchased, each item is purchased separately or a la carte.

Please use the following link for more information:

<https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/cms/one.aspx?pagelId=1098602>

Please use the following link to place money on a student's account through the MySchoolBucks website: (<https://www.myschoolbucks.com/ver2/login/getmain?requestAction=home>)

There are two "peanut/tree-nut free" tables in the cafeteria. Students who have an Individual Health Plan developed with the nurse will be seated here. Children may invite friends to join them who do not have any nut items in their lunches. Students are constantly reminded not to share food— please reinforce this at home.

Photo Consent/Web Consent

Student All Media Consent Procedures should be accessed through Genesis – Parent Access.

<https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/cms/one.aspx?pagelId=5147463>

Recess

All K-5 elementary schools will continue to provide recess.

- Students will have at least 25 minutes of recess.
- Outdoor recess will be held if 28 degrees or higher and outside conditions allow. The blacktop is used if the field/playground area is snow covered or too muddy.
- Recess is not used as a punishment.
- Students may be required to sit out for a few minutes to 'take a safety break' if something happens during recess.
- Teachers very often employ movement breaks at various times throughout the day.

Allow me to reiterate: Recess is not taken away as a consequence for inappropriate behavior. A child may have a "quiet lunch (eating time)" as per our Code of Conduct but will be included in the recess/movement time listed above.

Registration

Any eligible child shall be admitted provided:

1. The parent/caregiver follows the procedures of the Montclair Public School Registrar's Office. <http://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/district/registration/>
2. Proof shall be furnished of immunization against the communicable diseases at the time of enrollment or such immunization shall be completed within 30 days from entry into the school, or the pupil is exempted from immunization in accordance with policy.
3. Children can be examined by either the school or a private physician, and the results shall be furnished to the school on the form provided.
4. Pupils transferring into the district are expected to present copies of records from the previously attended school (or district) to aid in placement. Also required are proof of immunization and proof of identity.
5. Initial placement shall be made on the basis of the records, but adjustments may be made at the discretion of the administration when assessment indicates that such adjustments would be beneficial to the child. Parents/guardians shall be informed of this policy on registration.

Residency Hotline: (973) 509-4128

Those with questions or concerns regarding non-residency of students may call the above listed hotline number. All reports may be made anonymously and will be kept strictly confidential. Callers do not have to identify themselves when leaving a message.

Teacher Request

There are many factors that go into scheduling our students every school year. As a district (school) we do not take specific teacher requests. However, we will take into account any information you are able to provide us regarding your child's social-emotional development. All students will be placed with teachers who we know will help them to have a successful school year. Any information you would like to provide should be emailed to Mr. Krenn. **We do not entertain in-person meetings and/or phone calls on this topic.**

Code of Conduct

Overview of the Student Code of Conduct

We believe that children can behave appropriately in a climate of warmth and support; the goal of school discipline is to help children become self-directed citizens within a variety of environments and with different people. The Hillside School philosophy is based on a social-emotional approach to developing and learning. We believe that expectations for behavior and ways of dealing with misbehavior should be in accord with developmental goals. Clearly defined school rules and classroom procedures with incremental actions and consequences consistently carried out will foster appropriate behavior.

In accordance with the [MPS District Policy 5600](#), all students are expected to follow the Code of Conduct in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Actions to be taken will always include a learning moment intervention and possibly a punitive consequence. Elementary school grades K-5 are vital developmental years for children. It is goal to have children learn from mistakes.

*** In the event there's a conflict between two (or more) students; school personnel will discuss the details of the incident but will NOT disclose the actions/consequences taken with any other child other than yours. Consequences are confidential information pertinent to a child's educational programming.**

Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (ABR)

We often hear the misuse of language regarding **Code of Conduct Infractions** versus **Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB)** under the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (ABR). It is important to understand the type of behavior that is considered HIB under the ABR.

All of the criteria in the definition below must be present for an act to be deemed HIB. **HIB means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or series of incidents, that:**

- Is reasonably perceived as being motivated 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 disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic; **and**
- Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or off school grounds as provided for in *N.J.S.A. 18A: 37-15.3*; **and**
- 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; **or**
- Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; **or**

- Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the students.

Here at Watchung School, we take every reported incident/concern very seriously and we will always adhere to the due diligence needed to promote a happy, healthy, and safe learning environment that protects each and every student. To recognize the importance of character education we actively engage in social and emotional learning opportunities that promote positive citizenship throughout the school year.

School staff will receive annual professional development and must follow the statutory procedures for all reported HIB incidents and protect students. A reporting procedure is in place to promptly investigate reports of violations and complaints related to HIB. The investigation will be initiated by the principal or the principal's designee within one day of the report of the incident and shall be conducted by Ms. Scott, who serves as our School Counselor and School Anti-Bullying Specialist (ABS). Please refer to the MPS website for more information:

<https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=889560&pageId=1049270>

Health Office

Parents of new students, please make sure that you have submitted your child's **Health Survey, Most Recent Physical Examination form AND** an up-to-date **immunization record**, before the first day of school. These may be emailed to mmcshane@montclair.k12.nj.us.

All forms can be obtained in the nurse's office or by printing the form from the district's web site:

<https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=889560&pageId=1109676>

Yearly Physical Examination forms are greatly appreciated in order to keep the student's records up to date.

Immunization Requirements

New Jersey Law (NJAC 8:57) requires that any student enrolled in school must be immunized against certain diseases. Therefore, your child may not be admitted to school unless the following immunization requirements are met.

Students will need the following vaccines:

- 5 doses of Dtap (the 5th dose is not necessary if the 4th dose was administered after the 4th birthday).
- 4 doses of Polio (the 4th dose is not necessary if the 3rd dose was administered after the 4th birthday).
- 3 doses of Hepatitis B
- 2 doses of MMR
- 1 dose of Varicella

Routine Screenings

According to state law (N.J.S.A. 18A:40-4) the following health screenings are to be performed annually:

- Height/Weight & Blood Pressure: Kdgn. – 12th Grade
- Auditory Screening: K, 1st, 2nd & 3rd Grades
- Vision Screening: K, 2nd & 4th Grades
- Scoliosis: 5th Grade

Please note that screenings for Height, Weight, Hearing, Vision, and Scoliosis will begin in October. If you do not receive a referral letter, your child has met the guidelines.

Keeping Germs Away

The most important thing that you can do to keep from getting sick is to wash your hands. One of the most common and frequent ways to catch a cold is by rubbing your nose or eyes. To protect against infection, wash your hands frequently. Your hands pick up germs from other people as well as from contaminated surfaces. Washing your hands and keeping them clean will prevent you from infecting yourself with germs. For best results use warm water and soap and wash for several minutes.

Medical Absences

If your child or children are or will be absent, please call the main office and leave a message on the attendance line: 973-509-4260. Include the reason for the absence.

Returning to School after an Injury or Surgery

If your child has had surgery or any type of medical intervention or has been diagnosed with a medical condition that may preclude physical activity, we will require a note from the treating physician stating that your child is Medically Cleared. In addition, the doctor will need to outline any restrictions from full participation in school, if any exist.

Returning to School with Crutches, Casts, Splints or Orthopedic Boot

The physician must fill out the form (see forms under district tab at the web page) for the student to return to school with one of these devices. The physician must fill out this form in its entirety, including diagnosis, limitations, accommodations, duration of use, and gym and recess excuse.

When Your Child Should Stay Home

It is our goal for students to attend classes every day that school is in session. However, there are times when students need to stay home for their own health and/or the health and safety of others. Below are guidelines to help families decide when to keep a child at home.

- **The student has a temperature over 100°F. The child may return to school after having a normal temperature for *at least 24 hours*, while not taking any fever reducing medications (e.g. Tylenol or Motrin).**
- **Antibiotics are prescribed to the student. The student may return to school after taking the antibiotics for a *minimum of 24 hours* and being without a temperature over 100°F for *at least 24 hours*, without taking any fever reducing medications.**
- **The student seems tired/lethargic, pale, has little appetite and is generally not their self.**
- **The student is vomiting. The student may return to school *approximately 24 hours after symptoms are resolved*, and the child is able to tolerate a normal diet.**
- **The student has an undiagnosed rash. A rash may be indicative of many things, frequently of illnesses that are contagious. Therefore, a student should see a physician to be evaluated and to determine the nature of the rash. A note from the physician should be provided upon return to school.**
- **The student has severe cold symptoms, an upper respiratory infection, a persistent cough, a runny nose that he/she/they cannot manage by themselves and/or contain with tissues, or there are other symptoms that would interfere with effective school participation.**
- **The student is diagnosed with a communicable disease or illness. (ex: Influenza, Pneumonia, Strep Throat, Pertussis, Chicken Pox (Varicella), Impetigo, Scabies). Please contact the school nurse before sending your child back to school.**
- **Strep Throat – The child must have been taking an antibiotic for at least 24 hours before returning to school.**

Your child's physician can help you to determine if your child is able to return to school. However, it is important to make sure she/he is truly feeling better and is able to make it through a school day before returning.

Medication

To protect your child's safety, the school nurse should be notified when there is a change in your child's health status, or if a medication has been added, deleted or changed on the student's treatment plan.

It is the policy of the Montclair Board of Education that all medication taken during school hours be administered in the health office by either the school nurse or the parent. The only exception to this rule is the administering of prescription medication that is required in a potentially life-threatening situation such as in an asthmatic episode, a severe allergic reaction and diabetic emergency.

Furthermore, the district requires both parent and medical provider authorizations be completed and on file in the health office. **Medication cannot be administered at school until the written authorization form is completed.** These forms can be obtained in the nurse's office or by printing the form from the district's web site: <http://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/district/forms/>

This applies to all medication (prescription and over the counter) that will be administered on for a short term (e.g. antibiotics), routinely (e.g. for asthma) or on an emergency basis (e.g. Epi-Pen for severe allergic reactions).

In order for your child to receive any medication at school, please confirm the following:

- All medical consent forms and orders expire at the end of the school year. Medication orders must be renewed at the beginning of the school year. Medication must be brought to school by the parent/caregiver in the original container with proper labeling for the student. **Children are not permitted to carry medications.**
- A new written request must be completed for any changes to the original request.
- Students are not permitted by law to self-administer medication at school, with the exception of insulin, asthma inhalers, emergency epinephrine, and then only if written authorization for self-administration is provided by the parent/caregiver and the student's healthcare provider.
- End of school year: medication has to be picked up by the parent/caregiver during the last week of school. Medication not picked up is discarded and destroyed.

Head Lice

Unfortunately, many children will have at least one case of lice detected in the classroom before the year is over. At Watchung Elementary School, we want to help keep your child and our classrooms free of head lice. We suggest you read the information on the link below, for more information:

https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/departments/nurses/head_lice/faqs

