

Highland Elementary School Parent Handbook



**200 Highland Avenue
Wallingford, CT 06492
203-294-3970**

School Hours: 9:05 AM-3:30 PM

**Highland Elementary School
Emily Banach, Principal**

**200 Highland Avenue
Wallingford, CT 06492
Telephone: 203 294-3970
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August 2021

Dear Parents:

This handbook is written to inform parents of the policies and procedures of Highland School and the Wallingford School District. Input for this handbook was received from the Highland PTAC, Highland PTO and staff members. The information contained in this document will be a resource to you throughout the school year. Highland School is A Great Place to Learn! We have a dedicated staff that is anxious to work with families to ensure that students have meaningful learning experiences. I look forward to continuing our efforts to provide a quality educational program for all our students. Please reach out to me if you have any questions, comments or ideas to make Highland an even better place for our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Banach".

Emily Banach

**Children can't raise themselves.
Teachers can't substitute for parents.
Parents can't do the whole job, either.
But when involved parents work with dedicated
teachers,
There's no telling how far a child can go!**



Welcome to Highland School!

MISSION & VISION STATEMENT OF WALLINGFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

1. Mission: To inspire, educate and support all students as they discover and pursue their best.
2. Vision: Wallingford Public Schools, with families and community, will distinguish itself with innovative teaching and learning experiences in a safe and supportive environment. Our goal is to ignite passion for learning and excellence in every student so that each becomes a life-long contributor to the local and global communities.

MISSION & VISION STATEMENT OF HIGHLAND SCHOOL:

Mission:

To achieve our vision, we will guide our students to become independent learners with the tools necessary to develop a love of learning. We will create a caring environment for our young learners supported by our school, our staff, our families and our community.

Vision: Highland Community- C.A.R. E. S:

Caring and Nurturing
A Love of Learning
Respectful and Responsible
Educating the Whole Child
Sense of Community and Belonging

PREFACE:

The material covered within this parent handbook is intended as a method of communicating to students and parents regarding general district information, rules and procedures and is not intended to either enlarge or diminish any Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Material contained herein may therefore be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Any information contained in this handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination from time-to-time without notice.

This booklet is written for our students and their parents. It contains required and useful information. Because it cannot be as personal a communication as we would like, we address students not directly as “you” but rather as “the student,” “students,” or “children.” Likewise, the term “the student’s parent” may refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume responsibility for the student. Both students and parents need to be familiar with the District’s Student Code of Conduct which is intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere conducive for learning.

The Parent Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy that affect portions of this Handbook will be made available to students and parents through newsletters, web pages, and other communications as needed throughout the year.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The district will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, or disability. No student will be

excluded on such a basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources. Programs and activities shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by law.

Dr. Francis Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of Personnel is the designated district compliance officer, who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 .

PLEASE NOTE SOME OF THE BELOW INFORMATION HAS BEEN CHANGED FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND NECESSARY INFECTION CONTROL PROTOCOLS AND OTHER STATE MANDATES.

ADMISSION/PLACEMENT:

A student seeking enrollment in Highland Elementary School for the first time or following attendance in another Connecticut public school district, out-of-state attendance, private school attendance or admission through a bona fide foreign exchange program should contact the main office. A student who is transferring from non-public schools or schools outside the district will be placed at his/her current grade level. Students who are classified as homeless under federal law and do not have a fixed residence will be admitted pursuant to federal law.

ADVISORY COUNCIL (PTAC):

Representatives of the parents and staff meet with the principal on a regular basis to offer advice on school matters. The council provides input on budget issues, curriculum and instruction, facilities, student assessment, educational equipment, support services, new programs, additional staffing requests and school community relations. Personnel issues may not be discussed, as they are governed by State Statute. Any question or concern may come before the council for discussion by attending a meeting in person, submitting an item in writing or by contacting a member of the council.

ASBESTOS:

Legislation requires all school buildings to be reevaluated to determine if asbestos is present and if it poses a significant health hazard to the building's occupants. The District has on file plans showing the location of asbestos in each building and measures undertaken to comply with regulations to maintain a safe school environment. Requests to review these plans may be made in the school office.

The building is inspected every six months to determine any changes in the conditions of the materials. Additionally, the building is thoroughly re-inspected every three years by licensed asbestos inspectors following the same basic criteria as the original inspection.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL:

School hours

Students may begin to arrive at 8:50 and proceed directly to their classroom.

Grades K-2 9:05am - 3:30 pm, Preschool students: 9:05am-3:25pm

ASSEMBLIES:

There are times when classes, grades, teams or the entire school may gather for assembly programs. These programs are arranged to bring information or entertainment to the student community. A student's conduct in assemblies must meet the same standards as in the classroom.

ATTENDANCE:

Connecticut state law requires parents to make sure that their children between the ages of 5 to 18 attend school regularly. Daily attendance is a key factor in student success, thus any absence from school is an educational loss to the student. These rules are designed to minimize student absenteeism while providing students the opportunity to make up school work missed due to a legitimate absence. A student is considered to be “in attendance” if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school, such as a field trip, for at least half of the regular school day. A student serving an out-of-school suspension or an expulsion will always be considered absent.

ABSENCES:

Every attempt should be made to confine necessary appointments to after school, weekends and vacation periods. When a parent determines that an absence is necessary, parents are requested to contact the school at 203-294-3970 to report an absence. We have voicemail, so we offer 24-hour service. State your child’s name, teacher and a brief explanation of the absence. To comply with the attendance policy and to ensure the safety of all students, the office staff is required to contact parents who do not report. We ask that you call by 9:45 a.m. For the 2021-22 school year, parents are also required to verify the absence in writing within ten school days for absences one through nine. For the tenth absence and all others thereafter, documentation from a medical professional is now required for illness regardless of the length of the absence. All absences will be recorded as “unexcused” unless documentation is submitted within ten days of the date of absence and satisfies the definition of “excused” absence.

Students will have the opportunity to make up work missed during an absence. For extended absences of two or more days, parents may request work for home by calling the office by 10:00 a.m. and the material will be available at 3:30 p.m.

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

Students receive an excused absence when they are absent from school for the following reasons:

1. Illness or injury of the student.
2. Death in the family or other emergency beyond the control of the student’s family.
3. Observance of a religious holiday.
4. Mandated court appearances.
5. School sponsored activity.
6. Lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends. **(This reason does not require documentation)**
7. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by a district administrator and in accordance with State Department of Education guidelines. Written excuse for such absences should be submitted to school officials by the child’s parent or guardian. All other absences with or without written explanation shall be considered unexcused.
8. Suspension. **(This reason does not require documentation)**

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:

Unexcused absences are those which do not fall under any of the excused absences.

LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS/EARLY DISMISSAL:

Under no circumstances may a student leave the school or school grounds during school hours without permission from his/her parents or guardians and school administration. In the event it is necessary for a student to be dismissed early, a parent or guardian should send a written request to the office. Telephone requests for early dismissal of a student shall be honored only if the caller can be positively identified as

the student's parent or guardian. Children of single-parent families will be released only upon the request of the parent whom the court holds directly responsible for the child and who is identified as such in the school records, unless prior arrangements have been made with the school.

TARDINESS:

Students who are not in their homeroom by 9:05AM are considered tardy and must report directly to the office for an entry pass. A student discovered on school grounds who has not signed in at the office will also be considered tardy. A student who is repeatedly tardy may be considered truant.

TRUANCY:

A student aged five to eighteen inclusive with 4 (four) unexcused absences in one month or 10 (ten) unexcused absences in a school year will be considered a truant.

Parents have the responsibility to assist school officials in remedying and preventing truancy. The Superintendent of Schools will file a written complaint with Superior Court Juvenile Matters if the parent fails to cooperate with the school in trying to solve the student's truancy problem.

BULLYING:

Bullying behavior by any student in the Wallingford Public Schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. Such behavior is defined as any overt acts by a student or groups of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school sponsored activity, or on a school bus which acts are committed more than once against any student during the school year. Bullying which occurs outside of the school setting may be addressed by school officials if it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school. Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical violence and attacks
2. Verbal taunts name-calling and put-downs including ethnically-based or gender-based put-downs.
3. Threats and intimidation
4. Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
5. Exclusion from peer groups within schools.

Students and/or their parents may file a written report of conduct they consider bullying. Students may also make an informal complaint of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbal report to a teacher or administrator, who will promptly reduce the complaint to writing and forward it to the Building Principal for review and action.

Students and parents are permitted to make anonymous reports of bullying. Parent written reports and student anonymous reports will be investigated by the school administration but no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

District pupil services personnel and administrators are responsible for taking a bullying report and investigating the complaint. Parents of students involved in a verified act of bullying will be invited to attend at least one meeting at school.

CAFETERIA:

Students may purchase a hot lunch on a daily basis or bring lunch from home. Milk, ice cream, and snacks are available for purchase, too. The costs are set by the Board of Education and published on the

monthly menu. Free and reduced price lunch and milk are available for qualifying families. Application forms are sent to each household in September. Application may be made at any time. Parents are encouraged to prepay lunches by sending a check made payable to: Wallingford Food Services Dept. (please include student PIN number). Students whose accounts are low may charge their lunch. Any money charged must be repaid to the kitchen staff in cash. Students with outstanding balances will not be permitted to purchase snacks until the amount owed is paid in full. Weekly reminders will be sent home to families if their child has charged a lunch; this will be followed by a telephone call if the charge remains unpaid. **Due to COVID, all students are entitled to a free lunch for the 2021-2022 school year.**

Children are encouraged to sit with friends from their classroom in the cafeteria. Lunchtime is a break time for students and rules are limited. Students are asked to:

- a. Talk to friends using "indoor voices"
- b. Remain in the cafeteria for the lunch period
- c. Request permission to move about the room
- d. Treat adults and other students with respect

Warnings are generally effective with students who experience difficulty following the rules of the cafeteria. Parent contact is made for persistent problems.

CHILD ABUSE:

CT law mandates that any school employee that has regular contact with a student in the school system "who has reasonable cause to suspect or believe" that a child has been abused or neglected or is in danger of being abused or neglected must make an oral report followed within 12 hours with a written report to the Department of Children and Family Services (C.G.S. 17a-101) Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receive yearly training in their use.

Reporting of child abuse and neglect is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse or neglect a report will be made. The school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies in all cases.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, and deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment or neglect is also considered child abuse.

COMMUNICATION:

Open and honest communication is essential for the school community to attain its mission. Staff needs parental support and parents need staff input to work together for the benefit of all students. Concerns should be addressed in the following sequence:

Teacher
Principal
Superintendent
Board of Education

The advisory council is an excellent vehicle for addressing concerns, too. Parents may attend to present their issues or they may ask one of the representatives to speak on their behalf.

CLASS PLACEMENT:

Every effort will be made to place students with teachers where a positive student-teacher relationship will be established. Parents will have an opportunity to provide information relative to placement. The final decision for placement rests with the principal or his/her designee.

COMPUTER RESOURCES:

District resources have been invested in computer technology to broaden instruction and to prepare students for an increasingly computerized society. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only.

The District reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store at any time and without prior notice any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access and any and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage. All such information files shall be and remain the property of the School District and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such material.

Federal law requires the district to place filtering devices on school computers to block entry to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, harmful or inappropriate for students as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

CONDUCT:

Highland School Discipline Policy: The Highland School Discipline and Safety Committee has designed a discipline policy that will explain to both students and parent's acceptable behavior at our school. This document illustrates what a safe learning environment means, and how students are encouraged to exhibit positive behaviors at all times. All staff members will take part in ensuring that students display respectful behavior at all times during the school day. (Please see Responsive Classroom for additional information on student conduct.)

Highland School Rules:

Students will listen to adults and follow directions.

Students will use respectful language to peers and adults.

Students will avoid physical contact.

Students will maintain a safe environment.

Safe Learning Environment:

- No fighting
- Always keep your hands and feet to yourself
- No dangerous objects and/or weapons on school grounds
- Do not leave classrooms or school grounds without permission of school personnel
- Keep personal belongings organized and stored in designated locations
- Respect the right of every student to learn
- Respect the right of every teacher to teach
- Complete classroom and homework assignments on time
- Trading cards are not permitted in school

Courtesy and Respect for Others:

- Respect is to be shown for all schoolmates and adults at all times
- No put downs, name calling, hurtful language, inappropriate language or gestures
- Listen attentively when others are talking—in class, on the playground & in assemblies
- Applauding is appropriate—booing, whistling and shouting is inappropriate
- Respect the property of others as if it were your own

- Practice self-control everywhere in school

Take Pride in Our School:

- Do not deface school property
- Keep your classroom work area neat and clean
- Keep the cafeteria environment pleasant—speak using inside voices, use appropriate table manners and clean up after yourself
- Walk and play in designated areas

DANGEROUS WEAPONS & INSTRUMENTS:

No guns, knives or any other objects, including martial arts weapons and facsimiles of weapons, capable of threatening or causing injury or death may be brought onto school grounds. Any object used to cause injury will be considered a weapon. Violators will be subject to arrest and prosecution, as well as, appropriate disciplinary action. Any student found to possess a weapon on school grounds or during a school-activity will be expelled from school.

DRESS CODE (Board of Education Policy reference JFCA):

Students are expected to dress in keeping with good taste and in clothing that allows for participation in the activities of the school day. Extremes in dress and grooming that may be disruptive to the school operation, the educational process in general and/or the health, safety and welfare of the students are not allowed. Sandals with straps in the back may be worn in summer months, along with shorts. Tank tops are not allowed. During the winter months students may wear hats into and out of the building. During the warmer months hats are permitted outside only.

CYBER BULLYING:

The District's computer network and the Internet, whether accessed on campus or off campus, during or after school hours, may not be used for the purpose of harassment.

Cyber bullying includes, but is not limited to, such misuses of technology as harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another person by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful e-mail messages, instant messages, text message, digital pictures or images, or website postings, including blogs. It is also recognized that the author (poster or sender) of the inappropriate material may be disguised or logged on as someone else.

In situations in which the cyber bullying originated from a non-school computer, but brought to the attention of school officials, any disciplinary action shall be based upon whether the conduct is determined to be severely disruptive of the educational process so that it markedly interrupts or severely impedes the day-to-day operation of school. Also, such conduct must be in violation of a publicized school policy. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, threats, or making a threat off school grounds, to kill or hurt a teacher or student.

Disciplinary action may include loss of computer privileges, detention, suspension or expulsion. A communicated threat or a hate crime will be reported to the police.

DEFIBRILLATORS IN SCHOOLS (AED'S):

Highland has (1) one automatic external defibrillator (AED) and school personnel trained in AED operation and cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The AED and trained personnel will be available during the school's normal operational hours, at school-sponsored athletic events and practices on school grounds and at school-sponsored events not taking place during normal school operational hours. The school also

has an emergency action response plan addressing the use of trained school personnel to respond to individuals experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or similar life threatening emergencies.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND GAMES:

Students are not permitted to possess such items as radios, CD players, tape recorders, camcorders, DVD players, cameras, or electronic devices, and games. If such items are brought into school they will be collected by teachers and turned into the principal. The principal will determine whether to return the item at the end of the day to be taken home by the student or whether the parent will be contacted to pick up the item. Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION:

In the event of inclement weather or other emergencies, the Superintendent of Schools is responsible for broadcasting any change in the schedule. Should there be an early dismissal mass telephone notification system will be used to notify you. Please make sure that the school has your current phone number at all times. A recorded announcement may also be seen on WPS/TV – Channel 19 as well as the district website. Calls should not be made to the school office as the phone must be clear for emergencies.

PRESCHOOL-2 EARLY DISMISSAL & DELAYED OPENING SCHEDULE:

2 HOUR EARLY DISMISSAL:	9:05-1:30, LUNCH IS SERVED
2 HOUR & 45 MINUTE EARLY DISMISSAL:	9:05-12:45, LUNCH IS SERVED
3 HOUR EARLY DISMISSAL:	9:05-12:30, LUNCH IS SERVED
2 HOUR DELAYED OPENING:	11:05-3:30, LUNCH IS SERVED
3 HOUR DELAYED OPENING:	12:05-3:30, LUNCH IS SERVED

*Schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the Superintendent.

FIELD TRIPS:

Field trips may be scheduled for educational, cultural, or extracurricular purposes. Any student whose behavior is considered detrimental to the well-being of other students may be barred from participation by the principal. While on a trip, all students are considered to be “in” school. This means that conduct and dress standards will be appropriate for the field trip activity.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

Any student who needs financial assistance for school activities should contact the school social worker or the principal to request confidential help.

FIRE DRILLS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS:

Fire drills are held at regular intervals as required by state law. Students must follow the exit directions posted in each classroom. A crisis response drill (lock down drill) will be held as required by state law. Students are expected to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly and in an orderly manner.

The signal for a fire drill is a constant blast on a special horn. When the alarm sounds, students are to proceed along the posted exit routes in a quick, quiet and calm manner. Students should not return to the building until the return signal is given.

FOOD ALLERGIES:

The school is committed to providing a safe environment for students with food allergies and to support parents regarding food allergy management.

An Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) and an Emergency Care Plan (ECP) shall be developed and implemented for students identified with food allergies. Such students may also be eligible for accommodations and services under Section 504 and special education law.

The District's specific plan for managing students with life-threatening food allergies will be posted on the District website.

GRADING SYSTEM:

Report cards for Grades K-2 are issued three times a year in December, March and June. Report cards for Preschool are issued in January and June. Parent conferences are offered prior to the first report card and in conjunction with the spring report card. Parents will be informed of the date and time well in advance of the conference.

GREEN CLEANING PROGRAMS:

A green cleaning program to clean and maintain the school will be implemented by July 1, 2011. The program provides for the procurement and proper use of environmentally preferable cleaning products in the school. The cleaning products used meet standards approved by the Department of Administrative Services and minimize potential harmful effects on human health and the environment.

No parent, guardian, teacher, or staff member may bring into the school facility any consumer product which is intended to clean, deodorize, sanitize or disinfect.

HARASSMENT STATEMENT:

Every child has the right to feel safe, valued and comfortable in school. No one else's behavior should ever make children feel afraid or embarrassed because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or any disability they may have. Highland has zero tolerance for harassment of any kind. Students are expected to treat other students and school employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop.

Parents are urged to reinforce with their child (ren) that if he/she is harassed or sees harassment happening to someone else that he/she should report the behavior to a teacher or the principal. To maintain a productive and positive learning environment, the Board of Education will make every attempt to halt any harassment of which they become aware by calling attention to this policy or by direct disciplinary action, if necessary.

HEALTH SERVICES:

The health office is staffed from 8:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. by a registered nurse. She provides direct services to students who become ill or have had an accident, approves readmission for children as necessary, consults with parents regarding concerns, plans programs for classroom health lessons and performs a number of other essential health related services in the building. You may reach the nurse directly by calling 203 294-3972

Vision screening is done yearly for every student. The speech pathologists screen hearing for students in grades K-3, and grade 5. Contact is made with parents when a referral for further diagnostic work is recommended. Parents may call for results or additional screenings, if concerned.

The following health policies assist us in providing a safe environment for everyone:

1. If your child is ill in the morning, he should remain home.
2. If your child has been ill with a fever or vomiting, s/he should be kept home until the temperature has been normal for 24 hours.
3. Children are excluded from school with temperatures in excess of 100 degrees.
4. If your child is injured at home, he should be treated at home. The nurse will advise the classroom teacher on restrictions following your physician's orders.
5. When a child returns from 5 or more days of illness, the nurse will certify readmission.
6. Some childhood diseases necessitate exclusion from school:
 - Chicken pox -5 days from appearance of rash or until the eruptions are dry and covered
 - Scarlet Fever - Until on medication for 24 hours
 - Impetigo and ringworm - 24 hours after treatment has been initiated or at the discretion of the physician
 - Strep Throat - Until on medication for 24 hours
7. Children with head lice must be excluded until treated with a pediculicide and all eggs are removed. The school district has a no nit policy. The nurse must screen for reentry.
8. Changes in health information should be communicated to the school nurse immediately. The nurse will be responsible for sharing the information with appropriate staff.
9. Students diagnosis with contagious illnesses such as Conjunctivitis, Fifth's Disease, Strep Throat, Impetigo should obtain written documentation of the illness from the M.D. and instructions on when they are permitted to return to school.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION FOR STUDENTS:

Let's review the process for medication administration during the school day. Please note that we need the process followed because the school nurses operate under the same state laws that they would if they worked in any medical facility.

- Parents and physicians are asked to assess and to make every effort to arrange the schedule for administering medications at times other than during school hours if possible.
- When medications are to be administered during the school day we must have orders from a physician which specifies in writing the name of the drug, the dose, the frequency and duration of the order. Your school nurse has medication authorization forms available that you can pick up or that the nurse can fax to the physician office. The school nurse is not allowed by law to administer any medication, including over the counter (nonprescription medication) or a change in any medication without a physician's order.
- Important! You must provide the medication to school if it is ordered by the physician for a known medical condition. The medication must be delivered in and will be dispensed from a container properly labeled with the name and strength of the medication; name of the patient; name of the prescriber; the date of the original prescription; and directions for use.
- Self - administration of medicines is limited to those preparations contained in inhalers, epi-pens and insulin. In order to self - administer the student must obtain written authorization from both the student's physician and parent or guardian. The school nurse must evaluate the student's ability to self-administer before he is allowed to self-medicate. If the nurse evaluates that the

child is unable to self-administer the parent will be notified. As a rule elementary students do not self-administer but this can be evaluated on a case by case basis.

- All medications must be delivered to school by the parent or other responsible adult.
- Long term continuing medication orders are required to be renewed every September.
- State regulations require that the student's medication be picked up by the parent or designated adult any time it is no longer needed or by the last day of school. If the medication is not picked up, state law requires the nurse to dispose of the medication.

If you have any questions regarding medication administration in school your best plan of action is to call and discuss any concerns or questions with the nurse at your child's school. Have a healthy school year!

HOMEWORK:

The purpose of homework is to help students become self-directed, independent learners and is related to the educational progress of the student. It serves to help all students reach their instructional goals.

Specific homework assignments may strengthen basic skills; extend classroom learning; stimulate and further interests; reinforce independent study skills; develop initiative, responsibility, and self-direction; stimulate worthwhile use of leisure time; and acquaint parents with the student's work in school.

Homework assignments also provide for the development of responsibility and good work habits. Parents can expect homework at every grade level from parent-child activities for kindergarten to independent assignments in grade 2. Teachers will explain homework plans in more detail at the beginning of the school year.

INSURANCE:

School insurance is made available to families through a specific program. Brochures are distributed to all students at the beginning of each academic year. While the program is not mandatory, it is suggested that parents take advantage of the opportunity to provide adequate protection for their children while in school. Any such arrangement is contractual between the parent and insurance carriers and the Wallingford Public School assumes no liability from disputes arising from such contract.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) STUDENTS:

Parents of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students participating in a language instructional program will be notified within 30 days of their child's placement in the program. The notification will include an explanation of why, a description of the program, and the parent's rights to remove their child from the LEP program. In addition, the notification will explain how the program will help the child to develop academically, learn English and achieve the standards necessary for promotion.

Students not meeting the English mastery standard or demonstrating limited progress will be provided with additional language support services which may include, but are not limited to, English as a Second Language program, sheltered English programs, English Immersion programs, summer school, after-school assistance, homework assistance and tutoring. Students after 30 months in a bilingual program will not be offered additional bilingual education.

LOST AND FOUND:

A lost and found is located outside the office. Children and parents are encouraged to look through it at any time. Valuable items are kept in the main office and students should check with the secretary. Unclaimed articles are donated to a charitable organization. An announcement will be made in the school newsletter prior to the donation.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER:

Students are invited to use the books, magazines, newspapers, and other materials, including computers, located in the library. Students are responsible for any material they sign out. Materials must be returned to the librarian or the assistant at the circulation desk. Students must pay for any materials they lose or damage.

MIGRANT STUDENTS:

The district has a program to address the needs of migrant students. A full range of services will be provided to migrant students, including applicable Title I programs, special education, gifted education, vocational education, language programs, counseling programs and elective classes. Parents/guardians of migrant students will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation and evaluation of the migrant program.

PARENT CONFERENCES:

Parent-teacher conferences are offered to parents in the fall and spring. Conferences can be scheduled at any other time by contacting your child's teacher or the office. Conferences are not just to discuss problems. A parent teacher conference gives you the chance to get to know your child's teacher(s), to learn about the curriculum and to discuss your child's progress. It offers you the opportunity to share personal information that may help to improve your child's school experience. There are several things that you can do to make the conference a success. In preparing for the conference:

- a. Make a list of the things that will help the teacher understand your child better. Include special health needs or problems, outside interests or hobbies, feelings about school, relationship with family members and stressful situations which may be distracting for your child.
- b. Make a list of the things you want to find out from the teacher. In addition to a report on your child's progress, you may wish to know about services and programs the school offers, discipline policies, grading policies, daily schedules and homework policies.

PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION:

The Highland-Yalesville School PTO is an active and involved organization. The members work in cooperation with the entire school staff to sponsor cultural arts programs, to raise money to supplement funding by the Board of Education and to sponsor numerous family events. Room parents from the PTO assist teachers in coordinating parties, planning special events, chaperoning field trips and providing direct PTO contact with parents for PTO events.

Meetings are held in the evenings and are open to all Highland & Yalesville parents.

PARKING:

There are a limited number of parking spaces in the front of the building for parents. Approximately 70 additional parking spaces can be found at the back of the school in the driveway down to Sheehan High School. There is no parking in the bus loop during school hours. Parents may also park on Hintz Drive and Gregory Road. Parents who chaperon field trips are asked to park in the back of the school to allow parking for staff members. The parent drop-off/pick-up loop has the following specific procedures: Buses have the right of way at all times.

1. All children who will be picked up curbside inside the loop will exit through the front doors of the school and remain on the sidewalk by the loop. The pick-up/drop-off area will be identified by the placement of orange cones. Drop off takes place between the orange cones and students enter the building through the front doors. All students utilizing the parent loop, must be able to exit/enter their vehicle independently. They must be able to navigate seat belts/car seats/ opening and closing car doors independently. If a child cannot do these independently, parents must park their vehicle.
2. Place a photo identification card inside the front passenger windshield and have a photo ID available.

3. Vehicles must stay in line and move forward when space is available. No cars are permitted to pass another car on the inside.
4. Students in grade K-2 that are walkers or whose parents have parked their vehicle in a parking space will exit the building at the walker door located off the gym foyer. All preschool students will enter and exit the school from their classroom patio door. Parents will need photo ID's and must sign the parent pick-up sheet.
5. Parents/drivers must remain in their vehicles at all times. If a child needs assistance to enter/exit the vehicle, the parent must park their car in a parking space.
6. Parents that are dropping off items such as lunch money, homework, etc. must park their car in a parking space. The parent loop may not be used for this purpose.

PESTICIDE APPLICATION:

Only certified pesticide applicators shall be used in schools for any non-emergency pesticide use in school buildings or on school grounds. Pesticide applications are limited to non-school hours and when activities are not taking place. Areas to receive pesticide application will be posted and a written record of all pesticide applications will be maintained for five years. Parents/guardians and staff who want to receive advance notice of all pesticide use will be listed on a registry and such notice will be provided as required by law. Parents/guardians who want to be notified prior to pesticide applications inside their child (ren)'s school assignment area may contact the main office.

PHOTOGRAPHS:

School photographs are taken by a professional photographer and offered to parents in a variety of packages at a reasonable cost. All children are photographed as the office uses the pictures to update student records. Purchases by parents are optional.

PROPERTY, LOCKERS, AND EQUIPMENT:

It is the policy of the Board to hold students responsible for any loss of or damage to the property of the school under the jurisdiction of the Board when the loss or damage occurs through fault of the student. Any student damaging or defacing school property will be financially liable for restoring the property regardless of the condition of the property at the time of the destructive act, in addition to any other discipline up to and including arrest or civil prosecution as deemed appropriate. Searches of desks may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by district policy. Parents will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk.

RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM:

- Responsive Classroom is a way of teaching that emphasizes social, emotional and academic growth in a strong and safe school community. At Highland School, we began our Responsive Classroom journey in 2012. Classroom teachers began implementing Morning Meeting. Morning Meeting is how the day begins in every classroom. The class meets, greets one another and shares news. It is the warm-up to the day. During our Town Meetings, that occur approximately every six weeks, classrooms/staff share news and information with the rest of the Highland school community.
- One important tenet of Responsive Classroom is logical consequences. Staff will respond to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity.
- In RC classrooms teachers will use words and tone to promote active learning and self-discipline. Adults will engage in interactive modeling-teaching children to notice and internalize expected

behaviors. Students will engage in collaborative problem solving during both academic and social portions of their school day.

- We will implement additional components of Responsive Classroom such as Quiet Time and Closing Circle as time permits. Quiet Time is a ten minute block of time right after lunch/recess where students can read, work on independent work or confer with the teacher one to one. Closing circle will be the last fifteen minutes of the day where the class comes together to review the events of the day and look forward to the next day.

Additional information about Responsive Classroom will be shared during Open House and can be located on the Responsive Classroom website. www.responsiveclassroom.org

SAFETY/ACCIDENT PREVENTION:

Student safety on campus and at school related events is a high priority of the District. Although the District has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensure school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the school's code of discipline
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of staff who are overseeing the welfare of students.

SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE SPECIALIST:

The Safe School Climate Specialist for Highland School is Emily Banach, Principal. Her contact information is 203 294-3970 or ebanach@wallingfordschools.org.

SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES:

The school district recognizes the value of certain ceremonies and observances in promoting patriotism and good citizenship among the students. Therefore, activities in schools commemorating national holidays such as Memorial Day, Thanksgiving and President's Day are encouraged. Wallingford Public Schools reminds students, faculty and administration of the variety of religious beliefs, and all are urged to be conscious of and respect the sensitivities of others.

Activities related to a religious holiday or theme will be planned to ensure that the activity is not devotional, and that students of all faiths can join without feeling that they are betraying their own beliefs. Therefore:

1. Religious music shall not entirely dominate the selection of music; and
2. Program notes and illustrations shall not be religious or sectarian.

Students shall be given the option to be excused from participating in those parts of a program or curriculum involving a religious theme which conflicts with their own religious beliefs. If a parent or student has any questions regarding the use of religious music, artwork and/or symbols in a particular course/activity, the Building Principal should be contacted.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE:

The right to inspect desks, lockers and other equipment assigned to students may be exercised by school officials to safeguard students, their property and school property. An authorized school administrator may search a student's locker or desk under the following conditions:

1. There is reason to believe that the student's desk or locker contains contraband material.
2. The probable presence of contraband material presents a serious threat to the maintenance of discipline, order, safety and health in school.

This document serves as advance notice that school board policy allows desks and lockers to be inspected if the administration has reason to believe that materials injurious to the best interests of students and the school are contained therein.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

The district wants all students to learn in an environment free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is against state and federal laws. It is unwelcome sexual attention from peers, teachers, staff or anyone with whom the victim may interact. Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should report the alleged misconduct immediately to his/her teacher, social worker, guidance counselor, administrator, school nurse or any responsible individual with whom the student feels comfortable, either informally or through the filing of a formal complaint.

The district will notify the parents of all students involved in sexual harassment by student(s) when the allegations are not minor and will notify parents of any incident of sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee.

A complaint alleging sexual harassment by a student or staff member may be presented by a student and/or parent in a conference with the principal or designee or with the Title IX Coordinator.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS:

The district provides special programs such as but not limited to, gifted and talented, bilingual, learning disabilities and for those with other disabilities which affect a student's success at school. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact the school; the coordinator of each program is available to answer questions about eligibility requirements, programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations.

The District utilizes the Response to Intervention (RTI) process which combines systematic assessment, decision-making and a multi-tiered delivery model to improve educational and behavioral outcomes for all students. Academic and behavioral support and targeted interventions will be provided for students who are not making academic progress at expected levels in the general curriculum.

For students in need of Special Education programs, a planning and placement team (PPT) is designed to provide communication and decision-making at the school level concerning the effective use of available resources. The team is also responsible for follow-up and periodic review of all students presently in Special Education and special services programs.

Any child identified as possibly needing special education and/or related services must be referred to a special education Planning & Placement Team for evaluation (PPT). The PPT will determine whether special education services are required. Parents must give their consent before any evaluation can be done or any services can begin. An Individualized Education Plan, based upon the diagnostic findings of the evaluation study will be developed by the PPT, with parental involvement. Parents will be informed regarding the use of scientific, research-based interventions.

STUDENT RECORDS:

A student's school records are confidential and are protected by federal and state law from unauthorized inspection or use. A cumulative record is maintained for each student from the time the student enters the district until the student withdraws or graduates. This record moves with the student from school to school.

By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The Superintendent is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated. Records may be reviewed during regular school hours upon completion of the written request form. The record's custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

The parent's or student's right of access to and copies of student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records, such as teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher and records pertaining to former students after they are no longer students in the district, do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it, unless the parent objects to the release of any or all directory information about the child. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days after the issuance of this handbook. Directory information includes a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade levels, photograph, e-mail address, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received in school, and most recent previous school attended.

The District will release to the Parent Teacher Organization the names, addresses, telephone number and grade levels of students (unless the District is informed by September 15 of the school year that designation of such directory information has been refused as to a particular student) provided such information is to be used by the PTO for its own school activities or school business.

The District, when a student moves to a new school system or charter school, will send the student's records to the new district or charter school within ten business days of receiving written notice of the move from the new district. Unless the parents/guardians of the student authorize the record transfer in writing, the sending District is required to send a notice when the records are sent to the new district.

TELECOMMUNICATION DEVICES:

Students shall not use electronic telecommunications devices, such as but not limited to, a remotely activated paging device, cellular telephone and related devices while on school property, on school transportation or while attending a school sponsored activity on or off school property. The use of cellular telephones is permitted during lunch times only.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

The district telephone system was recently upgraded. Listed below are the new phone numbers for Highland School.

Main # 203-294-3970

Office Fax # 203-294-3999

Media Center # 203-294-3980

Nurse # 203-294-3972

Nurse's Fax # 203-294-3998

Social Worker # 203-294-3975

Psychologist # 203-294-3976

TEACHER AND PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

Parents have the right to request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s). The response will indicate whether the teacher is certified for the subject matter and grade taught; the teacher's undergraduate major and any graduate degrees or certifications a teacher may have. Parents will also be advised, if requested, as to whether the child is provided service by paraprofessionals and their qualifications.

TEXTBOOK CARE AND OBLIGATIONS:

Students are responsible for the care of books and supplies entrusted to their use. We will assess damage to textbooks, equipment or materials. In accordance with state law, the school reserves the right to withhold grades, transcripts, or report cards until the student pays for or returns the textbooks, library book or other educational materials.

TITLE VI, TITLE IX AND 504:

The Wallingford Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status or handicap in establishing preliminary hiring and employment practices and establishing and providing school activities and programs.

The Board of Education Compliance Officer for TITLE VI and TITLE IX is Danielle Bellizzi, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel. Mrs. Bellizzi's phone contact information is 203-949-6508. Her mailing address is 100 South Turnpike Road, Wallingford, CT 06492.

The Board of Education Compliance Officer for 504 is Ms. Aimee Turner, Pupil Personnel Director. Ms. Turner's phone contact information is 203-294-5946-6531. Her mailing address is 100 South Turnpike Road, Wallingford, CT 06492

TRANSFERS AND WITHDRAWALS:

Students withdrawing from school must notify the office one week in advance of their last day. At that time, they will be given forms for their parents to complete. Included will be a formal written statement of withdrawal and release of records form

TRANSPORTATION: (Board of Education Policy reference JFCC)

Bus transportation is provided for students who live 1 mile from the school or to students who must walk in areas considered to be dangerous. Students are assigned to a bus according to their home address unless the day care address is requested. The Superintendent on a yearly basis may approve changes in transportation. Request forms are available at the school office. Students are not permitted to ride a bus other than the one to which they were assigned.

Students are expected to behave in a manner that does not endanger themselves or other students. They are expected to observe the following rules:

1. Arrive at the bus stop a few minutes early.
2. Enter the bus in a quiet, orderly manner.
3. Follow the instructions of the driver.
4. Remain in your seat at all times.
5. Keep your materials out of the aisles and inside the bus.
6. Remain quiet and orderly.
7. Be courteous to the driver and fellow passengers.
8. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.
9. There is no eating on the bus.

Bus transportation is a privilege and conduct that threatens the safety of passengers will result in suspension of the privilege. Bus conduct reports detailing the infraction(s) are sent to parents with interventions suggested preventing suspensions.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMPLAINTS/PROCEDURES:

All complaints concerning school transportation safety are to be made to the Transportation Coordinator/District Business Manager.

VISITORS:

Prior to Covid and after Covid, visitors always have been and will continue to be welcome in the school at any time. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time shall be permitted and such visits shall not be permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment To insure the safety of our students, visitors are asked to enter at the front door and to sign in at the office. A visitors badge will be given and must be worn at all times while in the building. Parents who are dropping off homework, lunches, etc. should leave the items in the office and the secretary will notify the classroom teacher. The secretary will call students down to the office if they are dismissed early. Parents who are going to classrooms MUST stop by the office before proceeding directly to the classroom.

WELLNESS:

Student wellness, including good nutrition and physical activity, is promoted through the District's educational program, school activities, and meal programs. Federal and state standards will be met pertaining to all foods and beverages available for sale to students. At Highland School student birthdays are recognized without food. Parents may be a guest reader, conduct a craft with the class or share a family tradition. A sequential program of physical education is provided, in addition to time in the elementary school day for supervised recess.

A PARENTS' GUIDE TO DISTRICT POLICIES:

You will find the Wallingford Board of Education Policy on the items listed below on the district website www.wallingfordschools.org . This is a small segment of the policies that address the needs of students.

Attendance, Absences, Tardiness/Dismissals & Truancy-
Policy #5113 & 5113.a

Administering Medication to Students-Policy#5141.21 & 5141.21a

Bullying-Policy #5131.911 & 5131.911a

Search and Seizure-Policy #JFG

Sexual Harassment-Policy #JFHA & JFHA-R

Student Records-Policy #5125

Suspension and Expulsion-Policy #JGD & JGD-R

Transportation-Student Bus Assignments-Policy #EEABC

Transportation-Student Conduct-Policy #JFCC & JFCC-R

Transportation-Walkers and Riders-Policy #EEAA

Weapons and Dangerous Instruments-Policy #JFCJ

