



# Elementary School Parent Handbook

2019-2020 School Year

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Welcome back to school! Our teachers and staff have been busy preparing, and we are anxious to greet all our new and returning students.

Here is a reminder of the school procedures that help prevent confusion and ensure a safe and pleasant school environment. This information changes a little from year to year, so we ask even our “veteran” parents to **please read closely**. We know we can count on your cooperation and assistance!

## Absences

If a student will be **absent** for any reason, the School Office **must be notified by a parent or guardian**. If your child is ill, please call the office **before 8:30am.** **Messages may be left on our voicemail system at any time, day or night.** To leave a message, please **dial 638-4105, extension 4205**. If you know in advance that your child will be absent or will need to leave early, you may send a note ahead of time.

Please note that if a student is absent without notice from a parent or guardian, we will attempt to reach you by telephone. If we are unable to reach you and we do not know the whereabouts of your child, we will contact the High Bridge Police Department to help ensure your child is safe. This is why it is imperative that you keep your phone numbers up to date in the Parent Portal.

We need a call from you when:

- ❖ Your child is ill (must be called in DAILY), please state the nature of the illness.
- ❖ Your child will be late to school. Please state the time and reason for late arrival.
- ❖ Your child will be absent for any other reason than illness. Please state the reason for the absence.



Our school day begins at 8:30. If your child arrives after 8:30, they will be marked late (8:31 is considered late). If your child arrives at 11:50am they will be marked for a ½ day absent. If they leave school by 11:50am and will not be returning, they will be marked ½ day absent. In addition, listed below are further procedures that will be in place regarding numbers of absences:

- ❖ Once a student has accumulated 10 days absent, a letter will be sent home.
- ❖ Once a student has accumulated 15 days absent, a second letter will be sent home.
- ❖ Once a student has accumulated 20 days absent, a letter will be sent home explaining that the student risks retention at his/her grade level.

## Arrival/Dismissal procedures

All student drop-offs take place along the sidewalk in the parking lot at the north end of the building. Please **do not** drop children at the main entrance at the front of our building. **Only children accompanied by adults may enter or leave the building through the front door.** The front of our building is reserved for busses and other transportation vehicles. When unloading children from your car or van, please do not allow them to exit from the driver's side. Children should always step from the passenger side of the vehicle right onto the sidewalk or grass.

You may park your car on Mine Road and have your child walk up the Bunny Trail which is supervised from 8:20 until 8:30. This is a great option for avoiding the crowding which occurs in the parking lot at arrival. Concern for the safety of students walking to school prompted the High Bridge Borough Council to establish the "old railroad path," between Main and Thomas Streets, as a walkway. The Board of Education has established procedures (described below) which are intended to help students avoid crossing the dangerous Fairview Avenue/Church Street intersection and arrive safely at school.

### **...from the South end of town:**

All children walking to the Elementary School are to avoid crossing the busy intersections of Fairview Avenue/Mine Road and Fairview Avenue/Church Street. Children are not to walk to and from school along the Fairview Avenue sidewalk. Only those few children who live on Fairview Avenue -- or to the west between the school and Church Street -- are permitted on this walk. Students are to enter the walkway at Main Street or Mill Street (where a Crossing Guard is stationed) and proceed to Taylor Street. At dismissal, the children are to reverse the procedure. Students are not to walk along Mine Road to Taylor Street.



**...from the North end of town:**

Students are to cross Fairview Avenue with the Crossing Guard. They will walk on the sidewalk to the steps in front of the school, cross the driveway at the crosswalk, and proceed to the north end door.

At dismissal, students walking to the north end of town will be dismissed from the north end door. They will reverse their morning procedure. They are reminded to cross Fairview Avenue only with the Crossing Guard.

***Important Reminders:***

- ❖ Students may not walk over lawns or private property.
- ❖ Students are to travel the safe walking routes to and from school.
- ❖ Students may not loiter in the walkways.
- ❖ Students are expected to go directly home from school. They are not to remain on school grounds after dismissal unless accompanied and supervised by an adult. Please stress this with your child.

At dismissal children should not be on the playground without direct supervision. Kindergarten and carpool students will be dismissed from the lower level on to the blacktop play area. Students using the Bunny Trail will be dismissed from doorways on the south side of the building. If students cannot locate the person picking them up, they are instructed to speak to a teacher on duty who will contact the Main Office. Contact a staff member or office staff if you are unable to meet up with your child. Staff members carry radios for quick communication.

Teachers and staff serve as supervisors to insure the safety of our children. Please be respectful of their directions; they are here to help. Thank you for your consideration and attention to these policies and procedures.

Parents are asked to meet students on the sidewalk or the blacktop area. **DO NOT** park or wait along the sidewalk area, as this causes traffic issues and creates unsafe crossing conditions. Note that students are not permitted to enter the parking lot except when accompanied by an adult, so it is necessary for you to leave your vehicle and escort your children to the car.

If your child is to follow a different routine after school, please SEND A NOTE to school with your child. Please do not call the Office to ask us to notify your child unless there is a genuine



last-minute emergency situation. Getting such messages to students, especially at the end of the school day, is difficult, often confusing and always troublesome. As a result, parents' notes will be the only acceptable notification for students to stay after school, go home with a friend or other adult.

## Birthdays

On occasion, students may choose to bring in **treats to share** with classmates. Please drop your food at the front office in the morning. All food brought into the school **MUST** be approved by our nurse because of food allergies. When dropping off the food please include labels for all of the ingredients. This includes any item used in or on the treat (cake mix, frosting, sprinkles, decorations, etc).

## Communication

We encourage you to communicate regularly with your child's teacher. Please send a note, email or call if you have any questions, concerns or comments, and you can expect the teacher to respond within 24 hours during the school week. Our voicemail system will allow you to leave a telephone message at any time, day or night. Teachers' voice mail extension numbers are on our website.

Please **check your child's backpack and/or our website every day** for notes and announcements from school. We try to go as paperless as possible so the website has a Virtual Backpack created for these announcements, field trip forms, etc.

We email a Topper Tribune each Friday. This contains a brief summary of the following weeks' events. The email addresses are taken directly off of our Parent Portal. Each school has it's own Facebook page. You can find a direct link using our website.

We require a note from you when:

- You are picking up your student early for any reason.
- Your student returns from an absence.
- You are going out of town or know ahead of time that your student will be absent.
- Your child will have a different dismissal.



When you send a note to school for your child we ask that you put it on a full sheet of note paper and, ALWAYS include your child's full name, their homeroom teacher, the date and then place your signature on the bottom. Please keep the following information in mind:

- Your child gives the note to the classroom teacher in the morning
- The note is sent to the office for the nurse and/or attendance count
- Once the day is over, your note will be filed for legal purposes

## Discipline

Our goal is to create a safe environment for all the children. Discipline is perceived as supportive and positive. Though students may receive consequences as a result of their actions, we also discuss ways to avoid the behavior and become successful. Combined with cooperation and support from our parents, discipline should be a positive factor in our school. Our school rules are necessary to enable large numbers of people to live and work harmoniously together.

No child will stay after school for disciplinary reasons unless you have been informed at least one day in advance either by telephone or by a note from the teacher. You will be informed of the time your child will be dismissed if "staying after" is recommended. If you receive one of our notices to parents/guardians, please fulfill your responsibility and return it to school with your signature the next day.

For full details of our discipline please refer to our Elementary School Code of Conduct.

## Dress Code

The school seeks the continued cooperation and support from parents regarding student attire. Students are asked to wear clothes which are neat and clean in appearance and suitable for the school's educational atmosphere. The administration reserves the right to make the final decision regarding appropriate dress in school.

Unacceptable clothing:



- Clothing that portrays pictures or words that promote sexual activity, drug, alcohol, tobacco products etc
- Halter tops, spaghetti strap tops (straps must be at least one inch in width)
- Skirts or shorts shorter than fingertip length
- Unsafe clothing such as flip flops, high heeled shoes, pants that drag on the ground
- Hats are not to be worn inside school

## Emergency Contact Information

During the school year there may be times we will need to contact you concerning the health or safety of your child. **Please make certain we know how to reach you during school hours.** We rely upon the parent to update your emergency information using the Parent Portal in Genesis. We will use this to reach you and/or other adults who can take care of your child in an emergency.

Your contact information is also used for School Messenger. This program allows us to contact you with messages regarding school closings, important events etc. We also use this to send our Topper Tribune. It uses your cell phone numbers and/or email addresses. It is therefore, very important that you update your Parent Portal Emergency Contacts page throughout the year.

## HIB

The Board of Education believes that harassment, intimidation and bullying activities of any type are inconsistent to the educational process. All such behaviors at any time on school premises, at any school sponsored function are prohibited. The school's Anti-Bullying Specialist will investigate all complaints related to activities associated with harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Any student who is found to participate in any activities involving harassment, intimidation or bullying will be subject to corrective action to end the behavior which may include but not limited to counseling, warning, disciplinary action, and/or referral to law enforcement. Reference Board of Education policy #5512 on the district website [www.hbschools.org](http://www.hbschools.org).





When volunteering in the Elementary School, you must be HIB trained. This training must take place each year. The website training is at:

[hbschoolparents.nj.safeschools.com/login](https://hbschoolparents.nj.safeschools.com/login)

Your login is your email address and there is no password. Once you have finished your training, send in a copy of your certificate to the Main Office. Without this yearly training, you will not be allowed to volunteer at any time in the school. If you have questions, please contact the Main Office.

## I&RS

Intervention and Referral Service Committee (I&RS) is a school based problem solving group whose purpose is to assist with strategies for working with students who have problems in learning and/or behavior. The primary role of the committee is to help students receive the assistance they need within the regular education program setting. A plan is developed and put into place for a period of time. If the interventions are not successful, the committee may recommend referral to the Child Study Team. Students are referred to I&RS by their teachers and the parents will be notified and invited to participate in the team meeting.

## Lost and Found

Please put an identification label on all outer clothing, including hats, jackets, as well as lunch boxes, eyeglass cases, etc. Each year many unclaimed, unmarked items are given to charity. If your child has lost something at school, they should check the "Lost & Found" in the Main Lobby or the Nurse's Office.

## Lunch

Each month, a Maschio's lunch menu will be placed on our website. The price of an Elementary School lunch is \$3.00, or \$15.00 for five lunches, milk is 60¢.

High Bridge School District offers PaySchoolsCentral to our parents to fund student cafeteria prepayment accounts online. Payments can be made by credit card (Visa, MC or Discover) or ACH (electronic checking) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at your convenience.



Parents can review what their children are purchasing in the cafeteria along with account payment history information. When signing up for PaySchoolsCentral you must use your child's student ID number. This number is located in the Parent Portal.

## Parental Custody

If there are issues involving custody, whether legal or personal in nature, it is imperative that the office is provided with appropriate documentation. If you are not the primary residence of the child but would like all school notifications, please check our website's Virtual Backpack.

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

A parent teacher conference offers a special opportunity to share information about a student. The best conferences end with both the parents and teacher feeling they have learned something about the child and with a clear action plan on how to best support the child going forward. Our conferences are held October 10 & 11 and the February 20 & 21. These will be early dismissal days for your children and conferences will take place later during the day.

This year we will be using Genesis for parents to sign up for conferences. You will be contacted when we open the sign ups.

## Parking

Visitors to the school may use the 15 Minute Parking spaces directly in the front of the building, If you are staying longer, please use the main parking lot. Several spaces in front of the building are now reserved for staff, and we ask that you please leave these spaces open. Also, please remember that the yellow lined curb in front of the school must be left open. Please do not park along the front sidewalk as doing so will block emergency vehicles and the larger vans transporting students with special needs. In addition, if you park along the sidewalk across from the visitor's spaces, you risk damage to your car from others backing out.





Also note there are designated handicapped parking spaces in our front and end lots. These spaces are mandated by law and may be used only by vehicles with handicap registration.

# Playground

The overall goal of playground activities is to give the children maximum opportunities to exercise and explore. Another important goal is to have adults present to act as a deterrent to any inappropriate or unsafe activities and to offer if immediate assistance is needed.

If you are waiting for the children to be dismissed and have a younger sibling with you, please remember that our playground is to be used by High Bridge Elementary students only during school hours. You may use the equipment with a non-HBES student after hours.

Adults are expected to supervise their children at all times. All students are expected to use common sense and to play safely while enjoying the playground structures. Students are advised of our playground rules:

- No jumping off of equipment
- Play is not allowed when equipment is wet or icy
- Equipment is to be used only in the manner it was intended for (ex: slides are for sliding down, not for climbing up)

# School hours

<b>Preschool</b>	<b>Preschool</b>	<b>Preschool</b>
Regular Day-morning	Delayed Opening-morning	Early Dismissal-morning
8:20-11:20	10:30-12:30	8:20-10:20
Regular Day-afternoon	Delayed Opening-afternoon	Early Dismissal-afternoon
12:10-3:10	1:00-3:10	10:30-12:30



K-4	K-4	K-4
Regular Day	Delayed Opening	Early Dismissal
8:20-3:10	10:30-3:10	8:30-12:30 (no lunches served)

Students are to arrive no earlier than 8:20 am and are to report directly to their assigned classroom. Parents may not enter the school building with students or escort children to class. If a child has too much to carry, birthday treats, or other needs, parents may bring such items to the Main Lobby where they will be checked by the nurse. Please remember that the school day begins promptly at 8:30, and both teachers and students are busy with the morning routine.

All students arriving later than 8:30 must be signed-in at the Office by an adult. If you know in advance that a student will be late for any reason, please call the office (or send a note) and let us know. The school day normally ends at 3:10pm, but on early dismissal days, students are dismissed at 12:30pm. (NO LUNCHES WILL BE SERVED)

## Smoking

In accordance with State law, smoking is not permitted anywhere on school premises. Please remember that this includes the outside school grounds and playgrounds.

## Visitors

For the safety of our students all entrance doors to the school are locked. If you need to come into the school, please ring the bell at the front door. You will be asked to state your name and reason for your visit. Once gaining entry into the building, you must report to the main office to sign in and receive a visitor badge if applicable.

All visitors and volunteers must sign in at the office and obtain an identification badge. At the end of the visit they must sign out. It is important that we keep track of all visitors to our school.



Not only for safety reasons but also for emergency situations where we need to make sure that everyone in our building has been accounted for.

## Volunteers

We welcome visitors and greatly value the assistance offered by our parent volunteers. Check the PTO tab on our website for various activities and projects that they require help with. We have many different opportunities to help within the school. You must be HIB trained every year in order to participate in any activities within the school day and to chaperone on field trips. Please go to [hbschoolparents.nj.safeschools.com/login](https://hbschoolparents.nj.safeschools.com/login) for your training. (see HIB above)

## Weather

Please plan now for winter weather. It is a good idea to develop a plan for delayed openings and early dismissals. Explain to your children now -- and remind them later -- what to do if school is dismissed early.