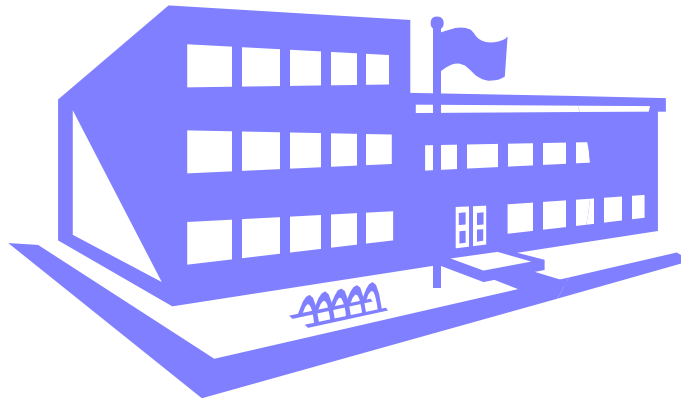


Chatham Central School District



**Mary E. Dardess Elementary School
Chatham, New York 12037**

Parent Handbook

Kristen Reno, Principal

2011-2012

CHATHAM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MARY E. DARDESS ELEMENTARY



Mission of the Chatham Central School District

The Mission of Chatham Central School Community is to nurture and challenge students to become self-directed learners who contribute positively to a culturally diverse world.



CHATHAM CENTRAL SCHOOLS

2011/2012

Dear Parents and Students:

Welcome to Mary E. Dardess Elementary School, fondly known as M.E.D.

I am very proud of our staff, our building and facilities, and the excellent support traditionally given us by parents and the Chatham community. It is my sincere hope that the students will find our school enjoyable and educationally rewarding.

This handbook has been prepared to provide students and parents with information concerning elementary school. It should serve as a reference tool. Our school and your home are partners together in an effort to provide the best education possible for each student.

If you have any questions or feel I can be of any assistance to you, please call.

Very truly yours,

Kristen Reno

Kristen Reno
Principal

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ATTENDANCE

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Regularity of attendance and punctuality are important for children beginning with their first day in school. The earlier children learn that school is their responsibility, the more satisfactory their progress will tend to be in school.

State law requires every student to attend school on every school day unless she/he has a legal excuse. Therefore, absence, tardiness, or departure from school before the end of a school day will be excused for the following reasons:

- Illness of the pupil.
- Serious illness or death in the pupil's family.
- Serious, contagious, or epidemic disease in the household where the pupil resides.
- Doctor or dental appointment which cannot be arranged at any other time.
- Required presence in court.
- Days approved for religious observance, upon prior written request of the parent or guardian.

Absences and tardiness for the reasons set forth above will be excused by the principal upon receipt of a written, signed explanation from the parent/guardian.

As part of the attendance policy, the school will communicate with you in writing when your child has been absent 10 days and again at 15 days. At 20 days, a Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) petition may need to be filed.

TARDY ARRIVALS

Tardy arrivals at school must be recorded on the student attendance card. If not for one of the reasons listed above, a tardy is also truancy. Repeated tardiness will result in intervention.

Late arrival by students is disruptive to the class as well as the student. Instruction missed and learning can become disjointed.

Appointments with dentists, doctors, barbers, and others should be outside of school hours to avoid the disruption to learning.

RIGHT TO BE NOTIFIED

Chapter 617, Laws of New York, 1985, mandates that every school district will inform persons in parental relationship to elementary school pupils (K-6) of such person's right to be notified when their child is deemed not in attendance at school. This law was passed in an effort to allow parents to search for a missing child as soon as it is realized.

Please call the school by 8:30 a.m. if you are keeping your child home from school. In the event the school does not hear from you, you will be notified by telephone to confirm that your child is home.

EXTENDED STUDENT VACATIONS

Vacation days outside of the official school calendar are technically illegal absences and require a marking of "truant" on the student attendance card.

Parental requests for "schoolwork" or "homework" for this type of extended vacation are unrealistic in that the teacher is expected to prepare a week or more of school work and the child is expected to complete it during a "vacation trip." This puts enormous stress on everyone resulting in very little value.

If it is necessary to remove your child from school for an extended period of time, please contact your child's teacher who will suggest activities suited to the child's age and grade. Such activities as journals, diaries, maps, photo essays, and collections make the period more valuable for all.

Your child's teacher will save workbook pages that would be done during the absence. This work can be completed by your child and corrected by you. The teacher will not grade them.

Tests that are missed would have to be made up within a week of your child's return to school.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

The Board of Education will provide, as appropriate, homebound instruction for students who are expected to be out of school for 10 consecutive days or more, upon the request of parents and with the approval of the family physician.

In each case, the physician must certify that the student will be unable to attend school for the length of time specified and that he is capable of receiving home instruction.

Homebound students at the elementary level will receive one hour per day per school week.

Home instruction will be given only on those days when school is in session. The Superintendent will approve each application before home instruction can commence.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The Superintendent may close the district schools or dismiss students and staff early when hazardous weather or other emergencies threaten the health or safety of students and personnel. If conditions affect only a single school, only that school shall be closed; if they affect only a part of a school day, schools shall be closed only that part of the day. In making the decision to close schools, the Superintendent will consider many factors, including the following principle ones that relate to the safety and health of children: weather conditions, both existing and predicted; driving, traffic, and parking conditions affecting public and private transportation facilities; actual occurrence or imminent possibility of an emergency condition that would make the operation of schools difficult or dangerous; inability of teaching personnel to report for duty which might result in inadequate supervision of students.

Television and radio stations that school calls in the event of closing are: WGY, WRVE (AM 81.0 / FM 99.5); WHUC (1230 AM, 93.5 FM, 98.5 FM, 560 AM); WRGB Channel 6; WNYT Channel 13; WTEN Channel 10; WGNA (107.7 FM); WFLY 92.3 (FM); WYJB (95.5 FM); WROW (590 AM); WAJZ (96.3 FM); and WZMR (104.9 FM).

Parents also can sign up for an emergency calling service at the beginning of the school year.

CLASS PLACEMENT

CLASS PLACEMENT

Every springtime, the staff of the MED Elementary School begins to consider next year's class placements.

Many factors go into the construction of each class. For example, as we build the class lists, the principal, classroom teachers, and resource personnel consider the following aspects: strengths and weaknesses of each child, boy/girl ratio, academic balance of the class, behavior characteristics, ability levels, social and emotional needs, as well as maintenance of heterogeneity of classes.

As a result of the need to consider all the factors listed above, **parents are not able to pick the teacher of their choice** for their child. However, parent input is welcomed and encouraged when a unique situation may exist.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

Chatham makes every effort to place students in the most appropriate learning level for a successful education experience. The following guidelines govern promotion and retention:

Students who do not make satisfactory progress in one or more basic subjects – reading, English/language arts, mathematics, social studies and science – shall have their cases considered on an individual basis and may be retained. A decision to retain a student shall be arrived at after conferencing with the teacher, psychologist, Building Principal, academic support teachers, and parent/guardian. Factors to be considered include teacher(s) recommendation, classroom achievement and attitude, standardized test scores if available, social, emotional and physical development. Final authority for grade placement rests with the principal.

COMMUNICATION HOME

PARENT CONFERENCES

Good communication between home and school is an important factor in establishing a highly effective school program. Planned conferencing between parents and teachers is an important way to bring about understanding and close cooperation between the home and school. Close communication should be maintained through conferences with all parents, not just with those for whom the child's academic or other problems suggest the need for communication.

The school principal is responsible for encouraging cooperation of teachers and parents in helping to meet the educational needs of pupils. Parent-teacher conferences, parent-student-teacher conferences, and parent-principal conferences are encouraged methods. These conferences provide opportunities for open communication regarding administrative procedures, instructional programs, goals and objectives, and pertinent information regarding pupil progress.

Every effort should be made by parents and teachers to find mutually agreeable meeting times, outside of regular instructional time.

REPORT CARDS

MED reports student progress on a trimester basis. All parents meet with teachers to discuss progress at the parent conference.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The following is a summary of various kinds of communication we use.

Open House - an evening in which parents are invited to come to school to meet our teachers, usually held in the early fall.

Parent-teacher conferences - scheduled by teachers at mutually agreeable times, generally in November and March. However, if a problem exists, a conference may be held any time during the year.

While these are our major programs of communication with parents, we urge parents to call and arrange a conference at any time during the year.

DISCIPLINE

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The following statement of discipline reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the M.E.D. elementary school. A detailed Student Code of Conduct is available in the school office.

**Mary E. Dardess Elementary School
Statement on Discipline**

Every child is an individual and every situation has its own uniqueness. Appropriate behavior in the elementary school is essential for learning and living in our school. We strive for student conduct that is self-directed. Our intent is to be flexible to best meet the needs of the child, the staff and the school. There are occasions when disciplinary action should be imposed to correct behavior and protect the rights of others.

When students make poor judgments, disciplinary responses are used and progress in severity. The situation is addressed in the setting where misbehavior occurred and the child is encouraged to make more appropriate choices.

In the event a behavior has not improved, staff may enlist the support of parents, principal, special education supervisor, counselor or school psychologist.

Consequences for inappropriate behaviors may include but are not limited to:

- Reminders of appropriate behavior
- Loss of free time
- Change of seat
- Removal from setting
- Restriction of privileges
- Parental contact
- Referral to Child Study Team
- Suspension
- Appropriate police contact
- P.I.N.S. Petition

When an incident occurs, an investigation is undertaken and, when appropriate, an action is taken.

- Teacher intervenes using:
 - Time out
 - Separation
 - Change of location
 - Time with an adult
 - Parent involvement
 - Child study team
 - Behavior plan
 - Removal from class
 - Consultation with counselor

- Principal intervenes using:
 - More formal counseling
 - Longer consequence time
 - Parent involvement
 - Outside agency involvement
 - Building child study team
 - CSE referral
 - Suspension

- Superintendent intervenes:
 - Superintendent hearing
 - Suspension

FOOD SERVICES

SCHOOL LUNCHES

Hot lunches are served daily with alternate lunches of soup and sandwiches. Students have the option of bringing their own lunches from home. You may prepay for meals by making arrangements with our cafeteria.

Lunch costs \$2.00, which includes milk. Students may also buy milk separately for 50¢, which comes in skim, 2%, 1%, and chocolate varieties. (*These prices are subject to change.*)

Menus are sent home monthly. Additional copies are available in the school office. The lunch menu is also posted on the district website.

Free and reduced price lunches are provided for eligible students. The forms for this program are printed in the district calendar which is distributed at the beginning of the school year. All information is confidential.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST

The school breakfast program lists its menu on the reverse side of the monthly lunch menu. Breakfast cost is \$1.10 (*price subject to change*) with a reduced charge of 25¢ for qualified students. Children may enter the building at 7:45 for the purpose of picking up breakfast, which will be taken to the classroom. Breakfast will be served from 7:45 – 8:00 each morning.

All menus and prices are subject to change.

HEALTH INFORMATION

MEDICATIONS FOR STUDENTS

The administration of prescribed medication to a student during school hours will be permitted only when failure to take such medicine would jeopardize the health of the student, or the student would not be able to attend school if the medicine were not available to him during school hours. "Medication" will include all medicines prescribed by a physician. Before any medication may be administered to or by any student during school hours, the Board of Education will require two documents: the written request of the parent, which will give permission for such administration and relieve the Board and its employees of liability for administration of medication, and the written order of the prescribing physician, which will include the purpose of the medication, the dosage, the time at which or the special circumstances under which medication will be administered, the period for which medication is prescribed, and the possible side effects of the medication. Both documents will be kept on file in the office of the school nurse.

Medication should be brought to school in the original prescription or over-the-counter container. All medication should be delivered to the Health Office by an adult. It will be kept in a locked cabinet or, if necessary, refrigerated and then dispensed as ordered by authorized school personnel. Only empty prescription/over-the-counter bottles may be returned home by the student.

INOCULATIONS OF STUDENTS

Under law, all students entering or attending school are required to have a written statement from a physician certifying that they have received immunization against poliomyelitis, measles, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, rubella, and mumps.

A student can be exempted from immunization requirements if a letter from an authorized representative of the church, temple, or religious institution attended by the parent/guardian is submitted or other documents are shared explaining the religious basis for refusing immunization. A review of each request for a religious exemption to immunization will be done by the principal.

FIRST AID

The school is responsible for giving first aid or emergency treatment only in case of sudden illness or injury to a pupil or a member of the staff. Further medical attention in the case of a student is the responsibility of the parent or guardian, or the person designated for emergencies.

HEAD LICE

With longer hair in fashion, and more vigorous strains prospering, head lice have become a traumatic problem that many families face at some time during the school years. Their residence in hair has nothing to do with "clean or dirty, rich or poor." They crawl on the handiest head and do not readily leave.

If nits (eggs) or lice are found, shampoo with a prescription medication. Over-the-counter medications are not as effective and even the best prescription shampoos do not claim 100% effectiveness. No wonder it is so difficult to eradicate head lice.

We have a "nit-free" policy in place which means a child may not be returned to a classroom until it is determined there are no nits remaining in the hair of a child who has had lice. This will help prevent the potential spread of lice.

Include regular head checks at home as routine home hygiene, and remind children not to share hats, combs, brushes, etc.

HOMEWORK

HOMEWORK

Homework provides an excellent opportunity for developing good study habits and for reinforcing and practicing lessons. Parents should share the responsibility for student learning by:

- Providing a study area free of distractions.
- Giving assistance but letting the child do the work.
- Helping create a homework habit at the same time each night.

Arrangements can be made for a friend to pick up homework assignments or for a parent to pick up if the office receives a call in the morning. Assignments will be available after 12:00 noon.

Homework Administration Guidelines K-12
(Also applicable to Chatham Summer School Programs)

Our homework administration guidelines are based upon the following principles:

1. Grades are used for the following purposes:
 - to communicate the achievements of students to parents and others;
 - to give information that students can use for self-evaluation;
 - to provide incentives for students to learn;
 - to identify students for different educational options; and
 - to evaluate program effectiveness.
2. Grades are not to be used as a means of disciplining a student unless the student's misconduct is related to his or her academic performance.
3. Grades are produced to measure the following types of learning criteria:
 - Product criteria (what students know and are able to do, e.g. tests, quizzes, homework);
 - Process criteria (how the student got there - effort, homework completion, class participation, work habits, etc.); and
 - Progress criteria (how far the student has come, as opposed to how he measures up against fixed standards).

Source: Dr. Thomas Guskey – University of Kentucky

The following guidelines will be followed regarding administration of the homework policy:

1. Homework is an important part of the learning process, and its completion is strongly encouraged. Deadlines for completion of homework will be clear and reasonable. Tardiness may affect either an overall grade for the work or a separate "process" grade.
2. At the start of each year or each course, teachers will communicate in writing to parents the system to be used for evaluating homework, and how homework performance will be represented in overall grades.

Cross reference – Attendance, #5100 and Student Progress Reports to Parents, #4712
Adopted: June 22, 2004

REGISTRATION

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Discovering for them what is the unknown, kindergartners new to the Mary E. Dardess School visit the elementary program with their parents during the spring.

The school goals for the entire registration and screening process are to break down fears of the unknown by providing parents and children with several opportunities to meet staff. Registration packets are available by mail. Screening takes place early in May.

Success will show itself during the summer if the new kindergartners begin to speak of "my school" and "my teacher."

School and home in partnership can provide great things for children. We encourage parental involvement and invite you to obtain membership in our P.T.A.

SCHOOL RULES AND PROCEDURES

CAFETERIA RULES

Children may purchase (1) snack as they come into the cafeteria and prior to sitting down. Once they sit down, they remain seated. Children need to purchase their own items and not give their money away to other children.

We encourage children to sit with different classmates to support social development.

These rules were developed by MED students:

- Walk – no pushing or shoving.
- Be a friend.
- Cooperate.
- Respect your environment.
- Be polite.
- Sit with those you may not like (or know...).
- Be quiet.
- Keep table and floor clean.
- Be nice to the lunch ladies.

PLAYGROUND

Here are some basic playground use rules. Grade levels and individual classroom teachers, as need dictates, will invariably add to this list of positively stated rules. (Developed by M.E.D. children.)

- Treat others as you want to be treated.
- No snowballs, footballs, tackling or throwing sand or stones.
- Line up quickly when you hear the whistle blow (3) times.
- Take turns.
- Stay in assigned areas.
- Avoid stray animals.
- Obey adults on duty.
- Keep hands to self.
- Tell the adult on duty you need to go to the bathroom and tell when you return to the playground.
- Report any injury to the adult on duty.
- Stay away from the fence.
- Enter the classroom only when the teacher is there.

RIDING BICYCLES TO SCHOOL

Only **fourth** grade students who submit permission in writing from a parent or guardian will be permitted to ride a bicycle to and from school. The building principal will authorize bike riding after a conversation occurs with the child on safety. If, in the judgment of the principal the bike rider does not comply with safety rules and respecting the space of walkers, permission will be withdrawn.

The bicycle must be chained to the school bicycle rack each day. A strong chain and a good lock are recommended.

A “freer” policy previous to this resulted in larger numbers of riders and several accidents or “near misses.” It is hoped that returning this privilege to older students will help alleviate that situation.

OUTDOOR RECESS

During the school day, it is necessary to revitalize young scholars with some fresh air and exercise before continuing with schoolwork. On cold winter days when everyone is cooped up indoors, there is a special need to get outdoors for a break.

Children should dress appropriately for school and on cold days when "bus waits" or walks to school are more of a trial than on warmer days, children should be adequately protected from the elements. This protection should also help them when they are outdoors for recess even if those periods are shortened due to the winter cold.

Classes go outside every day. There is no provision for a teacher to keep a child inside. Should your child be too sick to go outside for fresh air, please keep him/her at home.

CONCERTS/SPECIAL EVENTS BEHAVIORS

The MED Canaries are fourth graders who participate in chorus. They perform several times a year and have been asked to sing for events in the community. They are hard workers who enjoy the performing arts.

In order to show appreciation for the work they have done, please abide by these few simple courtesies:

1. Enter the performing area in-between songs if you arrive late;
2. Respect the performers by remaining silent during songs;
3. Show appreciation by clapping after a song and don't “whoop” at the children;
4. Attend to toileting before a performance so there is not a need to get up while children are singing.

PROCEDURE FOR PICKING UP CHILDREN AT THE END OF THE DAY

1. Send a note telling us of your intention to pick up that day, or a note stating this is a permanent situation.
2. Enter the building at the side entrance.
3. Follow the green hall to the right into the cafeteria. Sign your child out.
4. Children will be brought down and placed in class lines so parents can be matched with the child.

In the absence of a daily note or a permanent note, if your child is a walker, he/she will be dismissed out the front door. We will not know to hold your child unless you communicate that to us. **Please do not use e-mail as the primary communication tool for reporting changes.** Teachers often don't check e-mail until the end of a day – too late to implement a change. Write all changes in a note to us and send it in with your child to share with his/her teacher.

KINDERGARTEN WALKERS

If your child is to walk home with an older sibling or neighbor, that information also needs to be in writing. The kindergartner will meet that older child before leaving the grounds. We do not want kindergarten children walking alone. If you do not know an older child who walks home, please tell us and we will try to facilitate a connection with an older child.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

State law provides that all students receive physical education instruction. All students are required to wear sneakers for safety and performance reasons.

SERVICES

COMMITTEE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Formidable as its name sounds, the C.S.E. provides an essential service to the Chatham community. Any student having a disability comes under its jurisdiction.

The most common services provided by the C.S.E. are speech and consultant teacher assistance. Although some handicaps are severe, most children who benefit from the program services do so for speech therapy or a specific learning disability.

The services which comprise C.S.E. are psychological, social work, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, consultant teacher services, and special settings such as self-contained classroom, resource room, B.O.C.E.S. classroom and residential care.

Comprised of district staff, medical doctor and parent advocates, the Committee for Special Education (CSE) dedicates many hours weekly to plan for children with special needs.

The Chatham Central School District's special education services are excellent and the Committee strives to provide the staff and children with options and alternatives which truly personalize student education.

SITE BASED INTERVENTION

Meeting once a week before school hours, the Site Based Intervention Team compiles the experiences of about 130 years of teaching into a consulting body of staff members who listen to the presentations of their peers regarding children for whom a teacher may have concerns.

Whether the problem is behavioral, meeting the needs of a gifted child, a possible retention or a suspected handicapping condition, the team listens to the presenting teacher, questions and advises. Each avenue is considered and many options are explored in each year's series of presentations.

The principal has the ultimate responsibility for retention, promotion and class placement, yet she, too, listens closely to the advice of the 13 team members who represent each grade level, reading staff, psychological services and special education.

BANANA SPLITS

WHAT IS BANANA SPLITS?

Banana Splits is a support group designed to give students the opportunity to share their feelings with others who have experienced similar changes in their families.

WHO ATTENDS THE PROGRAM?

Any student who has experienced the transition of parental separation, divorce, death of a parent, or remarriage of a parent. The students meet in groups formed according to their age or grade level.

WHERE DOES THE GROUP MEET?

Each group meets in a private location within the Mary E. Dardess school building. Students are urged to share what happens in the group at home; however, confidentiality is stressed at all other times.

HOW DOES THE BANANA SPLITS GROUP WORK?

We usually sit around a table and work on art and game-like activities that are designed to stimulate discussion on certain topics (i.e., going to court, moving, changing schools). All discussions are led by professionals trained in counseling.

ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES

Our school provides services to students who have been identified as being at risk of falling below the state learning standards in English/language arts and math. Services can include additional instruction that supplements the general curriculum. Eligibility for A.I.S. is determined by performance on state assessments and/or in accordance with district assessment procedures.

TRANSPORTATION

Parents Play Important Role In School Bus Safety¹

To have an effective safety program, safety awareness must begin at home.

Each year from September to June, hundreds of thousands of school vehicles travel the nation's highways and byways. They cover millions of miles daily, transporting students to and from school. (*Chatham Central School District transports approximately 1,300 students almost half a million miles last year.*) The areas may differ but the goal in every case is the same: to accomplish this task safely.

Much has been written concerning the manufacture of vehicles, training of drivers, planning of routes etc., but an often untapped resource - and a critical one in terms of the success in the ever-improving implementation of safety - is the parents and guardians of the passengers.

School bus drivers have their hands full. They must operate the bus safely in traffic with as many as 60 or more students behind them. There is only a minimum amount of time for drivers to participate in bus safety instruction.

Safety-awareness must begin and be consistently reinforced at home. The following points are suggested to parents:

- Stress the importance of remaining seated and reasonably quiet while the bus is in motion. This may sound elementary; but any parent who has traveled in a car with several rambunctious youngsters knows how distracting and unsafe it can be to have them yelling and jumping around.
- Provide young children with a school bag and remind them to use it to carry all their papers. Loose papers are a serious hazard. It is easy for a child to drop one. The paper may then blow in front of or under the bus. A distracted driver may not see a little child run to retrieve his or her treasure, resulting in a horrible tragedy.
- Train your children not to automatically expect traffic to stop for the red overhead flashers of the bus. Deaths and injuries result all too often when motorists either don't see or deliberately ignore these warning lights and fail to stop. Children should *always look* before crossing.
- Try to find an established time - not too early and not too late - to have your children leave home for AM pick-up. **Remember, children should be at the bus stop before the established pickup time. If there is a question about the scheduled pickup time, ask the driver.** Students on the streets or roads too early can get into trouble by horsing around, and students who are too late may throw caution to the wind in their fear of being left behind.
- **Warn youngsters about strangers who hang around the bus stop.**
- There is no requirement in law that entitles children to door-to-door transportation. (18 EDR 412, 19 EDR 583) It is also not possible for all children to travel equal distances to and from the designated bus stops. A natural consequence of safe, efficient, and economical routing of school buses is that some children will travel greater distances than others in traveling to and from bus stops (18 EDR 412). The safety of children in traveling to and from bus stops is the responsibility of the parents, just as it is for those children who do not qualify for transportation from home to school (19 EDR 59, 22 EDR 405).²

¹Public Safety Article extracted from *School Bus Fleet Magazine*

²New York State Education Department rulings extracted from *The Pupil Transportation Safety Institute* guide "Safe Routes – Safe Stops"

- Escort kindergartners and other young children riding the school bus to ensure that they arrive and depart the bus stop safely. (***Chatham Central School District bus drivers will not discharge a kindergartner unless a parent or guardian is visibly present at the bus stop.***)
- Have your children properly dressed for bad-weather days. Vehicles are often delayed on such days. Boots, raincoats, warm clothes, etc., will help prevent illness. On the other hand, properly dressed children survive quite nicely in the rain and snow. They do NOT need to be personally driven to school or kept inside until the bus arrives. Over-protectiveness in this area increases traffic hazards, especially on the school grounds and at the bus stop, causing further delays and accidents.
- Warn children that all motorists, including buses, have reduced visibility in certain kinds of weather making extra caution as a pedestrian necessary.
- Students of all ages at a bus stop should always wait at the established bus stop in an orderly manner, in an area away from traffic and clearly visible to the approaching bus driver. Children should wait until the school bus is fully stopped and the driver directs the student to board. Pushing and shoving toward a moving bus can have tragic results. Another means of contending with this problem is for the school district to have an assigned seating procedure. (***Many of Chatham Central School District bus drivers have an assigned seat policy. Bus drivers are authorized to assign seats as they see fit to ensure order and safety on the bus.***) Knowing a specific seat is waiting can reduce a child's urge to board too quickly.
- Discuss the safety hazards involved in throwing anything inside the bus or out of the bus window.
- Make sure your children know their name, address and phone number. Write it down on a 3" x 5" card and pin it to young children's clothing for the first few days of school. Later place the card inside their school bag. If children become confused, it will be much easier for the driver or teacher to determine where he or she should be dropped off if the information is readily available.
- Explain to your children that a bus route covers quite a bit of territory in many cases. Young children often are under the impression that the bus goes only from their stop to the school and back again. They can become very upset to find themselves traveling through unfamiliar areas.
- Familiarize yourself with evacuation procedures and discuss them with your children. Knowing what to do in an emergency or breakdown is crucial to everyone.
- If a designated parent or guardian is not present to receive a kindergarten student, the bus driver will return the child to the district for a parent to pick up. Elementary school children will not be dropped off at unauthorized stops and will not be released to a person at a bus stop unless that person is designated in writing by the parent or guardian.

Bus Rules for Student Behavior

1. Students shall arrive at the bus stop before the scheduled bus pickup time. The District's intent is that children are waiting at the bus stop when the bus arrives, so that the bus is not delayed.
2. Students shall wait in a safe place, clear of traffic and, where possible, at least fifteen feet from the edge of the road.
3. Students shall wait in an orderly manner and avoid horseplay or disruptive behavior.
4. Students shall cross the road or street in front of the school bus only after the bus has come to a complete stop and upon direction of the driver.
5. Students shall go directly to an available or assigned seat as applicable when entering the bus.
6. Students will not change seats while the bus is in motion.
7. Students shall not occupy a position in the school bus that interferes with the driver's operation of the bus or the vision of the driver to the front, sides, or through the mirror to the rear.
8. Students shall remain seated, facing forward and keep aisles and exits clear.
9. Students shall observe classroom conduct, be courteous and obey all directions from the driver promptly and respectfully.
10. Students shall refrain from throwing or passing objects on, from or into buses.
11. Students are permitted to carry only objects that can be held on his or her lap.
12. Students shall refrain from the use of profane, inappropriate or disrespectful language.
13. Students shall refrain from eating and drinking on the bus.
14. Students shall not carry hazardous materials, nuisance items, or animals onto the bus.
15. Students shall respect the rights and safety of others.
16. Students desiring to board or leave a bus at other than their assigned bus stop must have a signed note, approved by their school administration.
17. Students shall not extend head, arms, or other objects out of the bus windows.
18. Students will not drop trash on the bus and will keep the bus clean.
19. Students shall not use tobacco, alcohol, drugs or any other controlled substance on the bus.
20. The bus driver is authorized to assign seats, whenever he/she deems necessary for the safety and well being of the students on the bus.
21. Students riding on large buses are encouraged to use seatbelts. Students riding on buses with a capacity of nineteen or less, are required, by law to wear seat belts.
22. Students shall avoid shouting and other excessive noise that may distract the driver.

VISITORS

VISITING THE SCHOOL

When picking up a child during the day, please go to the office.

In order for us to safeguard your children, it is necessary for you to sign your child out in the main office when picking him/her up early.

Parents arriving to pick up children should park in our short-term spaces. With so much traffic, parking around the circle is prohibited, as is parking near the loading dock. Short-term parking (less than 2 hours) is available in the diagonal spaces in the elementary lot (on the left as you come into the school grounds). These parking areas are clearly marked. There is a marked crosswalk to the school sidewalk from the parking areas.

*All parents and/or visitors to the building **must go directly to the office upon entering the building.*** This practice enables us to keep track of visitors and eliminates unnecessary and unplanned interruptions of your child's class and the teacher's lessons.

If there are to be changes in your child's regular routine, such as: being picked up early, someone else picking up, doctor or dental appointments, etc., please send a written note with your child. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE OFFICE WITH CHANGES FOR YOUR CHILD AFTER 1:00 P.M.**

As a visitor to our school, your behavior must conform with our district's adopted Code of Conduct.

ADULTS IN THE BUILDING

Activity in M.E.D. is purposeful. Adults are in the building by invitation (attending a meeting) or by design (volunteering in a classroom.).

Should a parent wish to visit a room, the teacher needs to have prior knowledge of the visit to determine how to disrupt classroom routine in the least possible way.

A parent wishing to sit with his/her child at lunchtime must alert the office of that intent in advance and will be limited to specific need at the time.

VISITATION GUIDELINES

Our school has many opportunities for families, friends and neighbors to come and visit. Some activities are intended to be open to everyone like our classroom Halloween parties. Parents, younger siblings and grandparents are welcomed back into the classroom after our parade. Also, our Arbor Day celebration is to be enjoyed by all. Treats after the Arbor Day activities may be enjoyed by all fourth grade family members. There are some activities that are intended for our own children, however, and other activities have some limitations placed upon them due to space/occupancy concerns and other considerations.

Classes invite parents, community members and younger siblings for their springtime plays. Birthday celebrations, however, are generally held for the classroom children only. Holiday parties like Valentine's Day and Christmas may see homeroom parents helping set up but are not open to the general public. The December sing-a-long is intended for MED students.

Field Day is an opportunity for parent volunteers to run stations and is not intended for siblings. Because the spring musical is open at night for parents, community members and friends, it is not expected that other school students or siblings attend when it is within the school day.

Our staff wants to discourage older siblings leaving their own classrooms and school for MED events so they can remain involved in their own learning. They have had the opportunities to experience these events when they were students at MED.

Moms and dads will receive invitations to end-of-year picnics and younger siblings will also be invited to attend. We appreciate not having older siblings leaving school to attend a class picnic.

We are grateful for all our classroom volunteers and we benefit greatly from parent attention that does not have to be divided between supervising younger children while trying to simultaneously teach at a learning center. Therefore, volunteers should not bring younger siblings along.

Middle school students should be directed to go home when they have early dismissal instead of coming to MED as all our students are still in the classroom having lessons at that time.

As always, the faculty, staff, administration and parents are committed to ensuring that all MED students are safe and engaged in a multitude of activities, events and programs that foster diverse educational and social experiences. Certain events, programs and activities as outlined above are only open to MED students or their immediate family members, while other events, programs and activities are opened to the community as a whole. Your cooperation, support and understanding are greatly appreciated by all stakeholders at MED. We value your participation in your child's education and look forward to your continued support to ensure MED continues to be the outstanding school it is because of that commitment and support. Thank you for your efforts.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please feel free to contact the class teacher or the principal at 392-1530.

TRESPASSING

A student is not permitted in any school building, other than the one that he/she regularly attends, without permission from the administrator in charge of the building. Should a student be found in a building without permission, the necessary authorities may be called and trespassing charges may be lodged against the student.
Adopted: June 4, 1996

VOLUNTEERS

We welcome parents and other individuals to serve as volunteers in our program. Volunteers can aid the school, working under the direction of the teacher, by:

- Supervising children while the teacher instructs a small group or an individual.
- Listening to child read.
- Helping child complete teacher-prepared assignments.
- Reading to children.
- Clerical work – filing, typing, correcting.
- Tutoring individual children under direction of the teacher.
- Sharing an expertise.

Qualifications for volunteering include:

- Being dependable and prompt.
- Having an interest in children and an ability to relate to them in a positive way.
- Being respectful of the confidential nature of the job.

We greatly appreciate our volunteers and respectfully ask that younger siblings are not included in the volunteer activity.

All volunteers are required to sign a confidentiality guideline before going into a classroom. If a volunteer does not work well in the building, we reserve the right to discontinue the relationship.