

Chestnutwold Elementary School
School Handbook
630 Loraine Street
Ardmore, PA 19003
(610) 853-5900, 8000

Chestnutwold recognizes each student as an individual with unique needs, expectations, and internal motivations. We welcome each of our students and families no matter their identity or constitution. We understand that each child responds differently to the instruction, programs and support we provide. Our school faculty and staff work with persistence to meet our students' needs in the classroom and across our school community by delivering diverse activity and learning opportunities. All are welcome here!

Opening day of school and school hours

- The first day of school for students in Grades 1 - 5 is Tuesday, September 4, 2018.
- Kindergarten students will participate in an Orientation on Tuesday, September 4th, and will begin a regular schedule on Wednesday, September 5th.
- The school day for students in grades 1 - 5 is 8:45 AM to 3:30 PM. Students enter the building starting at 8:35 AM. There is no adult supervision before 8:30 AM.
 - + Kindergarten: AM Session - 8:45AM - 11:25AM PM Session - 12:50PM - 3:30PM
 - + Grades 1 - 5: The morning bell rings at 8:45 AM Dismissal is at 3:30 PM.

Absences and tardy

- Please see the Haverford School District Board attendance policy regarding absences and lateness. **Please send a written note within three days when you child is absent from school or your child will be marked unexcused.** If you are aware of upcoming absences, you can submit a "Pre-

approved” absence request from the office. Complete this form and return it to our office at least two-weeks in advance of the pre-approved absences. Up to five days can be **excused if the goals and activity are related to education and are listed on the request form.**

- Late arrival to school requires a written note from a parent or guardian or the tardy will be unexcused. Please see our School Board policy found on the district website.
- Adults are on duty at three entrances until 8:45 AM: Loraine Street, Belmont Avenue, and rear parking lot. All entrance doors are closed and locked at 8:45 AM, and students are expected to be in homeroom at this time. If a child arrives after 8:45 AM, she or he should report to the Office before reporting to homeroom; a tardy will be recorded for that student on that day. A written note indicating a reason for the child’s lateness must be given to our school in order to excuse the tardy on school records. If a note is not received within three days, the tardy will be considered “unexcused.” (Please read our district policy – listed on our website - that is mandated by state policy.)

Arrival and dismissal

- While we appreciate the children’s desire to arrive earlier than 8:30 AM, please remember that there is no supervision by the School District available for students before 8:30AM. Children should not be left unattended on school grounds before 8:30 A.M. All students and parents are asked to remain outside or in the front vestibule until the 8:35AM bell, unless they have a pre-arranged appointment.
- If at any time you or your child would like assistance entering the building for any reason, please contact the office or your homeroom teacher.
- Parents or guardians may walk their child or children to class in the morning until Tuesday, September 12th. Take a photo of your child entering school, write a note for his/he desk, or just hang out with him/her. Please plan to exit the building by 8:55 AM so we can begin our Classroom Meetings and get on with our work with our students.

- Beginning **Thursday, September 13th**, students should enter the building and walk to their respective classroom independently. If a student needs an escort, a faculty member will gladly support the student.
- There may be occasions when parents wish to walk their child to his/her classroom. We encourage you to have a faculty member escort your student to class. If assistance is required, please politely inform the office staff.
- The beginning of the day is not the appropriate time to engage teachers in discussions. Teachers must focus on all of their students as they enter the building. If you need to speak to a teacher or you would like to arrange to visit your child's class, please write a note, leave a message, or send an email so that you and the teacher may find a mutually agreeable time to talk.
- Dismissal plans should be communicated to your child's homeroom teacher. Homeroom teachers oversee the dismissal of each student in their respective homeroom. The school must be made aware of any and all changes to dismissal plans in writing.
- Change in dismissal plans must be received by the homeroom teacher or front office in writing, except in the case of an emergency. Fax phone number: (610) 853 - 5979 (fax). In an emergency, please call the school office at (610) 853 - 5900, 8000.
- Please be sure your child knows his/her dismissal plan each day. Many children like to stay and play, or may make their own arrangements to visit friends. This can lead to confusion if the plans have not been communicated with their parents, guardians, or school. Supervision is not available by the School District after 3:30 PM.
- We will not honor a change in dismissal plans unless a parent or guardian communicates the change in writing – including bus plans. This note should be given to the homeroom teacher or the office on or before the morning of this change. Emergencies happen, we understand, and we will help however possible. Please call the office in the event of an emergency. The office will contact the student(s) and respective teacher(s).
- A “non-parent/guardian” cannot take a student from school without a written note from the parent or guardian.
- School grounds are reserved for Chestnutwold students during school hours and until 4:00. Signs are posted. Thank you.

Kindergarten procedures (AM and PM) - ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

8:35 to 8:45AM - Arrival

- AM kindergarten students who walk or ride the bus will gather and enter the building with the other students.
- When the bell rings, all doors to our school may be used as entrances. At least one adult is stationed at each entrance to the building.
- Students arriving after the 8:45AM bell must report to the Office where they will “sign-in” their child/student.

11:25AM - Dismissal for AM Students

- A teacher or instructional assistant will escort the “walkers” out of the building to the kindergarten playground area or bus. Parents should be waiting there to meet their child either in the car line or at the bus stop, unless the student is taking a bus to a childcare facility.
- A teacher or an instructional assistant will escort bus students to their bus.
- If an AM kindergarten student must be picked up by car, parents must follow the procedures explained in this document.
 - Note: Students are in recess at this time. Please drive slow and do not block the walkway in the parking lot.
- Change in dismissal plans must be received by the homeroom teacher or front office in writing, fax, or by email. We will not accept an email or a phone call. Fax phone number: (610) 853 - 5979 (fax). In an emergency, please call the school office at (610) 853 - 5900, 8000.

Kindergarten procedures (AM and PM) - ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

12:40 to 12:50PM - Arrival for PM Students

- PM kindergarten students who walk or drive to school will gather in the Kindergarten playground area where a teacher or instructional assistant will meet them and escort them to their classroom.
- Students who ride the bus to school will be met by a teacher or instructional assistant and be escorted to their classroom.

- Students arriving after 12:50PM will need to be signed-in by a family member or guardian in the Office. Any other written note will not suffice as an excused tardy.
- PM kindergarten students who are driven to school must enter the back parking loop from Loraine Street and follow the procedures outlined in our transportation section of this document.

Students will be at recess between 10:50 AM and 1:30 PM. Please, drive carefully!

3:30PM - Dismissal for PM Students

- A teacher or classroom assistant will escort the “walkers” out of the building to the kindergarten playground area by the Art Room doors. Parents should wait there to meet their child.
- A teacher or Instructional Assistant will escort students to the gymnasium where they will wait for the bus under adult supervision and walked to their respective bus.
- Children remaining for After Care provided by Family Support Services will be escorted to the prearranged Family Support Services meeting area; typically the Cafeteria.
- If a PM kindergarten student must be picked up by car, parents must follow the transportation procedures outlined in this handbook.
- Change in dismissal plans must be received by the homeroom teacher or front office in writing, fax, or by email. We will not accept an email or a phone call. Fax phone number: (610) 853 - 5979 (fax). In an emergency, please call the school office at (610) 853 - 5900, 8000.

2018 – 2019 School Year

Kindergarten reporting schedule

Half-day student dismissal information including

Date	Day	Grades 1 - 5	K	Reporting K
October 31	Wednesday	11:50	11:30	AM reports
November 19 *	Monday	11:50	11:50	PM reports
November 20 *	Tuesday	11:50	11:30	AM reports
November 21 *	Wednesday	11:50	11:50	PM reports
January 18	Friday	11:50	11:30	AM reports
February 15	Friday	11:50	11:50	PM reports
March 13 *	Wednesday	11:50	11:30	AM reports
March 14 *	Thursday	11:50	11:50	PM reports
March 15 *	Friday	11:50	11:30	AM reports
May 3	Friday	11:50	11:50	PM reports
Thursday, June 13, 2019 - Kindergarten students' last day				
Friday, June 14, 2019, Grades 1 - 5 student last day <b style="color: red;">Kindergarten does not report.				

Trimester, Report Card and District Testing dates

	Trimester ends	Report cards	Conferences
T1	11/21/18	12/7/18	11/19 – 11/21
T2	2/22/19	3/8/19	3/13 – 3/15
T3	6/7/19	6/14/19	N/A

** Report cards are sent home electronically. If you would like a hard copy of your child's report card, please contact your child's homeroom teacher.*

ONLINE Kindergarten Registration:

Preregistration: February 4, 2019 starts at 7:00 PM

Registration (Kindergarten): February 19-22, 2019

Registration (Grades 1-5): Year Round

PSSA

2019 PSSA testing window: [April 15, 2019, to May 3, 2019.](#)

Please schedule vacations around the PSSA dates. Confirmed school testing dates (days) will be sent in April of 2019 in preparation for the PSSA. The testing window is shown below for your convenience:

Language Arts (Three days)	April 15 – 26, 2019
Math (Two days)	April 29 - May 3, 2019
Science (Two days)	April 29 - May 3, 2019
Make up testing	April 29 - May 3, 2019

Transportation

** Obey the traffic signs...*

1) Drive SLOWLY through the parking lot and around schools at all times!

2) Follow the direction of the teachers/faculty monitoring safety for our students.

- 3) Drivers should not exit their car while in the car line. If you must exit your car, please park in designated spaces only. You may park in the basketball lot (NOT BETWEEN 10:40 and 1:30) or on the street.
- 4) Stay in the car line to keep traffic moving.
- 5) Students should exit/enter vehicles in the car line once the vehicle has reached the basketball court, but not after the middle of the building (approaching the parking lot exit).
- 6) STUDENTS SHOULD EXIT/ENTER CARS ONCE THE VEHICLE IS PARKED, AND NOT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET.
- 7) Be patient. Safety is the priority.

Visitor Parking

- 1) You may park in the bus lane for no longer than fifteen minutes between the hours of 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM, and 1:10 PM and 3:00 PM.
- 2) For extended visits, longer than fifteen minutes, you may park in the basketball court between 9:00 AM and 10:40 AM, and 1:30 PM and 3:30 PM.
- 3) On the street parking is encouraged. Please abide by the posted parking signs.
- 3) PLEASE: DO NOT PARK IN FRONT OF OR BLOCK OUR NEIGHBORS' DRIVEWAYS. Be considerate of our neighbor's property as they are of our school and students. Additionally, you will be ticketed. Thank you.

Drive/Drop-off in Car Line

You must use the Loraine Street entrance to the parking lot.

There is no parking along the Loraine Street sidewalk next to the school building.

DRIVE SLOW! BE PATIENT.

- Students should exit vehicles in the car line once the vehicle has reached the basketball court, but not after the middle of the building (approaching the parking lot exit).
- Drivers should remain in their vehicle.
- After drop-off, please exit the parking lot slowly. Enter the left lane to turn left only after your child has exited the vehicle.
- If you must enter the building, please park your car on the street, the basketball court, or in the rear lot, as per the above instructions.
- Do not drop-off children along the building side of Loraine Street.
- Please park in designated spaces only.
- You must drop-off in the parking lot area.

There is no parking, stopping, or standing along Belmont Avenue – the bus lane is for buses only!

All students must wait outside the building and/or in the vestibule area until the 8:35 AM bell rings. Students enter the building at 8:35 AM, unless arrangements have been in advance. There is no adult supervision before 8:30AM. Please be mindful of your child's safety.

Dismissal/Pick-up in Car Line

You must use the Loraine Street entrance to the parking lot.

Students are dismissed at 3:30 PM. Please arrive in the parking lot AFTER 3:20 PM.

- Cars must not remain driverless. Stay in your car while waiting.
- Do not park in the car line. Do not hold up traffic by waiting for your child in the car line. You may need to park in an assigned area or circle around the block.

- There is no parking along the sidewalk of the school side of Loraine Street. Traffic laws and the rights of our neighbors prohibit parking or stopping on the school side of Loraine Street at any time.
- Do not park to wait for your child along the side of the building in our parking lot. Use the basketball court or street parking.
- STUDENTS are to enter a vehicle once it has reached the basketball court or crosswalk area; not at the exit to the parking lot.
- Students should not run through the parking lot to enter a car. Park the car in the basketball court if needed.
- After picking-up, please exit the parking lot area. All cars must exit promptly.
- You must pick-up children and/or park in the parking lot area.

If you must enter the building, please park your car on the street or in the rear lot.

All students must wait outside the building and/or in the vestibule area until the 8:35 AM bell rings. Students may enter the building at that time, unless arrangements have been in advance and in writing. There is no adult supervision before 8:30AM. Please be mindful of your child's safety.

School Policy Information

- Meeting with school personnel: If you have questions or concerns about a classroom matter, please contact the teacher first. A meeting can be arranged, if needed, with that teacher or team of teachers. Teachers and families are encouraged to resolve classroom matters in that setting.

- All visitors must report to the office. Bring your license or we cannot permit entrance beyond the front office.
- Please contact the principal directly when you have questions about school programs, policy, or procedures. You may call the office or contact me directly to arrange a meeting where your concerns and/or questions can be discussed.
- The “Chestnutwold eMailer” is the primary communication tool used by the Principal. It is sent most Wednesdays or Thursdays, depending on activity. The “eMailer” includes information related to Chestnutwold School, our students, faculty, and/or families. The “eMailer” is sent to the email address you provided when registering your student in our District. Please contact the school if your email address has changed or if another should be added.
- Our lost and found is located in our cafeteria. You can come to the office, sign-in, and visit the lost and found from 8:30 to 11:00, or from 2:00 to 3:15P.M. Please label your child’s personal belongings.
- Please monitor hygiene and communicate with our school any information that requires the attention of our school nurse or school community. This can be done discretely by calling the school nurse or counselor.
- All absences must be reported by 9:45 each day of your child’s absence. A written excuse note must be received by the school district within three days of the absence or, by default, the absence will be recorded as “unexcused.”
- “Pre-approved” absence request forms are available on our district website or the office. Complete this form and return it to office at least two-weeks in advance of the absences. Up to five days can be excused using this format, but the absences must be

educational and the information must be evident on the request form.

- Students are not permitted to use a cell phone during the school day. Cell phones and all electronic devices should be kept in the student's school bag. School bags are stored in public areas, so exercise caution when sending these items to school. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Students are permitted to use the school phone if they need to contact their family in an emergency during the school day.
- Toys, cards, and other play items brought into school: Please do not send your child to school with toys that make noise, require movement on the part of the child or toy, project light, or resemble a weapon. These types toys are not permitted in the building and will be held in the office until a parent retrieves it. Often, these are the source of conflict due to misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

Additional items for our students and families

- Flip-flops are not safe for our students who run during recess
- Please, no midriff or spaghetti straps
- T-shirts and tank tops should have appropriate words and symbols
- Appropriate body parts should be covered at all times in school
- Sleeveless under tee shirts are discouraged
- Please monitor the length of your child's shorts
- All electronic devices will be stored in the locker
- No toys or games are permitted during school hours
 - These items will get lost at recess and/or during their travels to and from school.

- Our students go outside for recess daily unless:
 - Temperature below (about) 28 degrees – indoor recess
 - Driving rain – indoor recess
 - Snow – indoor recess
 - Temperature above (about) 95 degrees and very humid - indoor recess

- **Please be mindful of our Safe foods list can be found on our school website, in your child’s classroom, or in the office.**

School/District Volunteer

Think what one-hour of time given by each adult in the school community will provide for our students and school community. Each year I ask our families to contribute one hour outside the school day. Just one hour given by each person can make a big difference to the programming we can provide to our students. One hour donated by each adult translates into tremendous potential energy for everyone in our school community.

We welcome school volunteers in our community school! If you wish to volunteer for any district-sanctioned activity, you must have up to date clearances approved by the district in advance, as per state law. Volunteer information can be found on our district home pages under the Parent heading. Here is a link to the district page: [Haverford Volunteer Information](#). Arrangements for school volunteers should be made with the respective classroom teacher.

Food Allergies and Outside Food Brought into the Building

<https://www.haverford.k12.pa.us/cms/lib/PA01001043/Centricity/Domain/6/2017%20SDHT%20Recommended%20Safer%20Foods%20Smart%20Snacks.pdf>

Please access to the above link to read our District's policy and expectations for Safe Foods brought into our school.

The district is providing you with the following information to help you understand the food allergy issue in the classrooms and school, and to set policy for birthdays and school celebrations. This information and the Safe Foods List are also available on the school and district websites.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

To honor a student birthday, we ask that non-food celebrations be arranged with the teacher at least one week prior to their special day. To minimize disruption to the instructional day, we also ask that these celebrations be limited to no more than 25 minutes.

Alternative suggestions that do not include food for birthday celebrations are included below.

- Donate a book to the library or classroom with your child's (first) name and a note.
- Read to the class
- Teach a skill to our students
- Share artistic talents and engage the class in learning about them
- Reading a favorite book to your child's class
- Donating a book to the classroom or school library with a birthday inscription
- A selection of books to purchase in the name of your child or family can be found on our Mrs. Jayne Dambman's webpages, our school librarian.
- Asking your child's teacher to extend community meeting time for the class by 10 minutes in honor of your child's birthday
- Teaching the class a simple craft, art activity or game

- Providing a small token to classmates in honor of your child's birthday
- Engage the class in an activity that centers on reading, drawing and/or other interests your child may have
- Engage the class in a cultural activity that will expose our students to something unique about a particular background

Food brought into the building will be monitored by school personnel and must meet the policy expectations outlined in our District's policy. School/Grade level initiated celebrations should use the Safe Foods List as a guide, but can deviate from the list under the consult of the principal and nurse. Any deviation must be communicated to the teacher, school nurse and principal, each family included in the celebration. There is no guarantee any deviation will be permitted. Food may be sent home if it is not district approved as *safe*.

Communication

Chestnutwold communicates with families using a weekly eMailer and/or our phone messaging system. To minimize the use of paper, most of the general news and information is sent electronically. We rely upon the phone system for important information that must be communicated immediately, quickly and is necessary because the news will likely change our schedule or planned activity. A weekly email is sent each week celebrating past events and previewing upcoming school related activity.

Chestnutwold Calendar

Please be sure to check our calendar for updated events, meetings and activity including times, places and people. You access our school calendar via the school web site.

Our School Community

In 2016 and 2018, Chestnutwold was recognized by the National organization, Character.org, for our “promising practices” planning, modeling, and delivering meaningful character programming to our students, teachers, and families. We are excited to build on this honor and our awards by extending opportunities like these and more that serve each student and community member in all areas of academics and social and emotional learning. We are committed to the whole child approach of education.

Our school was recognized in 2018 as a “School of Kindness” for how we foster a culture of safety and belonging. The programs and culture that earned us these awards had been in place for several years now, and have improved over time. Chestnutwold has always been a school that promotes belonging, kindness, and character education, as evident in our daily practices, interactions, and focus; the titles given to us by the mentioned organizations award us good fortune.

At the foundation of our character education work is our school’s ChCK Traits (see below). The work we do around the six traits is ongoing and evident in all that we do. Students and teachers alike are familiar with these six traits and the expectation that they will be evident in our behaviors and practices. We are excited to apply for our Character School accreditation in the 2018 – 2019 school year. This recognition will culminate years of work with our students, teachers, and families.

Chestnutwold has developed partnerships with various organizations across the region and looks forward to continuing our work with them again this year. These partnerships include, but are not limited to: Universities who assist with our STEAM programming and instructional development; local and regional government agencies; philanthropies to support our service learning projects; and the Haverford secondary schools who support our programs.

“Family Night” in October is an evening when our parents and guardians are invited to participate and learn about some of our school’s programming. This is an adult only event. It is an opportunity to see our teachers demonstrate school programming and activities as they would for our students during the

school day. Attendees leave with a better understanding of how our programs support the mission and goals of our school.

In 2017 – 2018 we added a “Celebrate Your Family Night” to the calendar. This event is scheduled for March of 2019. The purpose is to strengthen each family’s sense of belonging and to reinforce community connections among all stakeholders. Families are invited to showcase something important to them or something that highlights an important family event, ritual, or celebration. In the past, families shared prepared food, music, artifacts, recipes, and more with our school community.

School Community Theme 2018 – 2019: What will you do?

Our theme for this year is taken from Kobi Yamada’s books: “What Do You Do With An Idea?” “What Do You Do With a Problem?” and “What Do You Do With Chance.” Like we have done in past years, we will connect the messages, ideas, and themes shared in these books to our school vision, activities, expectations, interactions, and our Chestnutwold Character Kid (ChCK) Traits. The most obvious connection will be to the 21st Century programming Chestnutwold offers its students, but there are also themes associated to our work with kindness and community (our ChCK Traits), and that of valuing yourself no matter what comes your way.

We will have fun exploring curiosities, problems, and ideas this year in our work with STEAM and the work we do with our Social and Emotional Learning programming

The following information about Yamada’s “Idea” book was adapted from, The Children’s Book Review, June 29, 2014. A quick read will make it clear why this book (and the others like it) fit so well with our work, and, we hope, will compel our students and entire school community to be curious, ask questions, and make meaningful connections to others and the world around them.

The message in, What Do You Do With An Idea?, is clear - welcome and nurture ideas with patience and persistence, no matter how big or small, no matter how unique or popular, and they may grow to change the world. The books contain creativity, mindfulness, complexity, and inspiration.

What Do You Do With An Idea? is about a boy who has an idea, illustrated as a golden crowned egg with legs. The boy wonders about the peculiar golden biped; its origins, its purpose, its place in the world. The boy was uncomfortable, he was unsure what to do with the idea and so he tried to deny its existence. But the idea was persistent and would not leave, in fact it seemed to be growing and eventually, the boy got used to having this idea around. As the boy becomes more comfortable with the idea, he tentatively starts sharing it with others. Many laughed at the peculiar looking idea, as the boy suspected they would, but the boy perseveres. Becoming more confident, the boy decides to ignore his detractors and nurture and love the idea, to the point where he can't imagine life without it. The boy discovers his idea gives him the feeling of being alive and also perspective on seeing life differently. With the boy's attention and dedication, the idea beautifully changes the world and permanently becomes part of everything around him.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Character, and School Compact

SEL is one of our school's top priorities. Chestnutwold has been recognized by several national organizations for the meaningful and effective programming we deliver to our students. This is evident to any person or visitor who experiences our culture and community. As mentioned, we have earned several awards for our work with students in this area and have presented our work and successes at many conferences. Our teachers and students invest in perpetuating a safe and inclusive school for all students. We firmly believe that learning happens best when the learner feels those around him/her are supportive and believe in him/her.

Chestnutwold Character Kids (ChCK) Traits

Formally adopted by the Chestnutwold School community in 2014, our Chestnutwold Character Kid (ChCK, pronounced "check") Traits program celebrates our students when they demonstrate good character in school. Aligned to the 11 Principles of Effective Character Education issued by the Character Education Partnership ®, and the Character Counts ® program, our model is founded on six character traits: Responsibility, Respect, Empathy, Trustworthiness, Positive attitude, and Integrity.

Attention to the ChCK traits is the focus across Chestnutwold during classroom meetings and restorative sessions, and is expected in all interactions. Classrooms read stories, role play, discuss scenarios, and engage in activity through which students and teachers identify ways they can make informed decisions for themselves and others about how to manage ethical dilemmas while being conscious of our ChCK Traits. The goal is to help our students understand that attention to these six traits will: foster a stronger and safer learning environment, help students achieve in our school and in their respective area of interest, and help them succeed in any life-long activity they wish to pursue.

I AM Wall

The “I Am...” wall is designed to shatter stereotypes, build efficacy, and promote a community sense of belonging. The idea supports the cultivation of our ChCK traits, and helps to connect our students to each other by building awareness, personal value, and trust. Each “I Am” statement refers to the author’s uniqueness or character, and is designed to promote or “shatter” something about which the (I Am) author feels strongly.

We want to engage students in reflective thinking about self-efficacy, personal responsibility, and responsibility to others, and want bring each community member “closer” to our school and mission. Each school community member is invited to record his or her “I Am” statement on a note card during a teacher lead meeting. Students share their statement with their class, explain its meaning under the guidance of our teachers, and then their card is hung on the “I AM Wall”. Each year, the new “I AM” poster is on display outside the office hallway for the school community and visitors to see.

In 2018, the “I AM” wall inspired the creation of our “**rock garden.**” Each student decorated a rock in a way that shows something important about him or her, in addition to how they are important to our school or our school is to them. The rock garden is on display throughout our school gardens. We look forward to creating this year’s “I AM” wall and building our rock garden this year.

Bucket filling to build and strengthen community

Chestnutwold Elementary School invites you to support how our school community recognizes and celebrates any student or faculty member's efforts and work. Started in 2012, as a way to affirm the efforts, energy and persistence of our students and staff, we adopted Dr. Donald Clifton's enduring "*bucketfilling*" story, Tom Roth and Carol McCloud recently authored children's books, "How Full is Your Bucket," and "Have you Filled a Bucket Today."

For those unfamiliar with the story, "*the bucket*" represents a person's social and emotional well-being. The story tells how "each of us is born with an invisible bucket" and how we can *fill another person's* bucket when we recognize him or her; give him or her positive attention; and/or share positive thoughts about that person with that person. At Chestnutwold, our students and staff have done this by recording these thoughts on a slip of paper and depositing the note into the respective person's bucket.

Each classroom has a "bucket" where students share positive thoughts about their peers and/or teachers. Students write a note the provided slip of paper and drop it into the classroom bucket. These messages are read and discussed during community meeting time. The school community is invited to fill another person's bucket (faculty, staff, or friend) with affirmations and/or notes to positively recognition the contributions that person has made to the Chestnutwold school community.

Reading Buddies

Chestnutwold kindergarten and third grade; first and fourth grade, and second and fifth grade students engage in academically and developmentally appropriate activities six to eight times during the school year. "Reading Buddy" partners remain in tact for the year and teachers work collaboratively to strengthen the relationships through various activities. Activities are designed to include both the facilitator and buddy. Meetings are scheduled during classroom meeting time and center on reading, writing and/or community building. During these meetings, students interact collaboratively to solve problems and discuss various school themes.

Activities are guided and facilitated by faculty. A monthly theme is provided for the teachers and differentiated for the different grade levels.

These monthly activities connect to the Chestnutwold Character Kid program adopted by Chestnutwold in 2014. This program was recognized by the national organization, Character.org.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) believes that “peer-helping programs are one means of helping students reach a higher level of maturity and accepting responsibility.” *Buddies* are assigned by grade level and *fit*. Grade level teams work with their cross grade colleagues to plan and place students with a *buddy* based on four categories: (1) academic performance and work ethic, (2) ability to handle variance, (3) self-awareness and efficacy, and (4) interpersonal skills. Grade level *Reading Buddy* activities are centered on an academic task that includes reading, writing and discussion.

School Compact

Our School Compact is our primary and most immediate source of student support in our school. The focus is to nurture an environment where all school community members feel safe to share ideas, concerns, accomplishments, and/or to behave with genuine character. Further, we want to extinguish behaviors before they become destructive, disruptive, and/or harmful to others or the student him or herself. Our focus is to use the experiences as learning experiences. We want each community member to learn, understand, and apply strategies that will help him or her to contribute to our school community and its environment in positive ways. Moreover, the student will learn and engage in practices where he or she will be able to restore him or herself in the environment and interpersonal relations when necessary.

Non-negotiable protocols for our School Compact are:
Students and adults will (1) be attuned to their self and interactions, (2) act with emotional self-regulation and equanimity, and (3) behave with tolerance and empathy for others. Students, teachers, and faculty will work in collaboration to learn and become life-long productive members of a community.

The PA Human Relations Commission promotes equal opportunity for all and enforces Pennsylvania's civil rights laws that protect people from unlawful discrimination. As Pennsylvania's civil rights leader, it is our vision that all

people in Pennsylvania will live, work, and learn free from unlawful discrimination. To learn more click on the link below:

<http://www.phrc.pa.gov/About-Us/Pages/About-PHRC.aspx#.V5iu9vkrKig>

We strive and work assiduously to ensure our school community is a safe learning environment for each student. Adopted programs and our initiative with them evince the value we place on school belonging, personal value, and school safety in general. The school community environment is built on trusting relationships, high and consistent expectations, persistence and accountability. Chestnutwold commits large amounts of time to developing our environment through community practices, interactions, curricula, celebrations, expectations and meaningful classroom tasks. Each school community member is expected to reinforce these practices and principles in their daily activities at school.

The underlying tenets have been in place since 2013 and evolved to include elements of our Character Education program, including meetings, individualized student plans or interventions, and ChCK Traits. The principles of our model are: community involvement in expectations and roles, community rules, celebrating each other's success, and community meeting. Its most fundamental practices have been adopted from several proven ideas: 1) Choice Theory, 2) Collaborative Problem Solving, 3) Responsive Classroom, and 4) 1-2-3 Magic. There are no distinct boundaries that delineate where one theory or practice ends and another begins, our program is an amalgamation of what works for our students and school community. The School Compact has been created, and will continue to evolve, to suit the needs of our school community.

A point system is used to track student performance. A student who earns 15 points in one trimester jeopardizes his or her participation in extra-curricular activity (examples not limited to: grade level celebrations, school assemblies and/or classroom activity). The student, family and school are in communication about a student's behavior and points.

School Discipline and Restoring the Environment

We believe in helping our students work through challenges so that they can learn, develop, and practice appropriate social and emotional skills. In

general, each interaction we have with another person is an opportunity for us to learn and develop. For children and adults alike, sometimes the interactions are not interpreted with the intent initiated and an injury may result. Often, guidance is needed and possibly some reflection to help with future engagements. We support our students' growth and development through these experiences and help them work to restore the disrupted environment they created. A meeting with the people involved is scheduled and often includes those affected by their decisions.

This is the premise that underpins our support for those in our community who have experienced challenging interactions. Not all challenges are created equal and more support or guiding authority may be necessary in certain situations. In each situation, however, it is our goal to help students understand how they can manage through a similar interaction in a way that preserves kindness, empathy, independence, and belonging. Through our restorative practices, we teach our students how to rely on their self-awareness and self-control to help them manage their emotions and actions for their benefit and that of the entire school community. Life takes resilience, patience, and fortitude; all traits we must teach our children.

Writing

Boy oh boy do we love to write! Just look at our past awards and you see that our efforts are working. Each year our students and teachers enter various regional, state, and national writing competitions, and each year we receive recognition for the quality work we submit. Chestnutwold is committed to teaching our students how to write well, and expect writing in all classes each day. Writing and reading are appreciated as much for their craftsmanship and beauty as they are for communicating and learning.

Ralph Fletcher, Lucy Calkins, *Writer's Notebook*, *Writing Workshop*, and related works have influenced our instructional practices. These influences have helped us develop a writing program that is evident in all content areas across the school, in addition to the numerous awards our school community has earned over the years since adoption.

STEAM

Chestnutwold prides itself on being a 21st Century School. We prepare students for what is expected in their secondary schooling and life experience in the knowledge based work force. We have developed a model 21st Century learning program for all students in our school. 21st Century learning is one of the pillars in our school's framework (the others are Character Education, Core instruction, and Community culture). All students, kindergarten through fifth grade, have access to 21st Century learning in all areas of our school. 21st Century programming is delivered using an Inquiry Based Learning (IBL) model that includes STEAM and Problem Based Learning (PBL) activities.

Students work in small groups across their grade. They learn and practice how to collaborate, communicate, think critically, and be creative, in addition to a few related skills needed to access and participate in the 21st Century workforce. Classrooms are transformed into creative learning spaces where students learn coding and technology, robotics and engineering, physics and ecology, and sociology and anthropology.

Each year, Chestnutwold students and teachers are confronted with an authentic problem to solve. There is no easy single answer solution to these problems. Throughout the school year, each grade level engages in activities to solve the problem. Research and exploration is taking place throughout the school year in a variety of ways. Guest speakers, who are practitioners and experts in their respective fields, make presentations and work directly with our students to guide their thinking and problem-solving skills.

Team Building and Efficacy

Students are paired with a younger or older peer and participate in team building and leadership types of activities. Pairings are carefully arranged so that the students mutually benefit from the experience. The activities promote and strengthen interest in school, awareness, tolerance, self-efficacy, attendance, and academic achievement. Peers meet before school a few days each week with Mr. Kershaw to “get their engine started,” or to, “burn off some energy “ in advance of the school day.

School Delegation

Two students from each homeroom will meet monthly, and sometimes more, to share classroom, grade level and/or school-wide concerns. The teacher will determine the student selection process. Groups are divided into primary grades (K – 2) and upper grades (3 – 5). The principal will facilitate all meetings.

These homeroom delegates will speak on behalf of their respective homerooms and/or grades. Students will collect information from their peers in homeroom and present it to the delegation and principal for discussion and consideration. The delegates will report back to their respective homerooms. They will share a summary of the meeting and all related information during teacher designated meeting time.

In the past, our school delegation raised funds for Make-A-Wish Foundation, made changes to the recess/lunch schedule, and encouraged safer play at recess, to name just a few things. The delegates also assume additional leadership responsibilities during assemblies and school wide rituals and/or celebrations.

Recess -Play Safe - activity

Chestnutwold adopted Kurt Hinson’s recess Play Fit® program and modified it to fit our school needs. Chestnutwold hosted Dr. Hinson on multiple occasions over the years and has now adapted this packaged program in a way that uniquely fits our school community’s needs. Dr. Hinson demonstrated his games with our students and staff at assemblies; he facilitated workshops with our teachers and support staff; and has been a valuable resource in how we provide a safe recess environment for our students. Today, Mr. Kershaw, our recess monitors, students, and faculty understand and apply the principles of Chestnutwold’s version of “Safe Play Recess.”

Additionally, Mr. Kershaw practices these games with our students in PE class. He visits each grade level at recess once each week to observe, monitor and evaluate our students’ engagement in the games they play. He works with students and staff at recess and workshops so all can enjoy a safe and appropriate recess environment.

Students are free to choose from among the various activity at all times, and do not need to participate in one type of game, but these are available for all students each day. This is the only unstructured play time for our students and we want to preserve it in as safe a way possible so they can be kids.

Conflict Mediators are present during each recess to help students settle common less tense conflicts that arise between peers. Ms. Jen Munch, our school counselor, trains our students in the principles, practices, and expectations for what it means to be a Conflict Mediator. This leadership opportunity benefits both the Mediator. The conflict is resolved immediately and safely. These matters are recorded and reported to Ms. Munch for further investigation, if needed.

Up to eight students on any day may remain inside during recess to complete schoolwork, study or do homework. We understand not all students enjoy playing outside at this time and may prefer enjoying a quieter environment where they can play indoors.

In the event of rain, excessive heat or cold, our students remain inside. We do our best to provide opportunity for our students to move around in these instances by making the gym or LGI room available for play. When these locations are not available, students choose between two different locations amongst three classrooms: quiet room, games.

Technology Club

Fifth grade students must apply and be selected by their teachers to participate in Chestnutwold's Technology Club. The "Tech Club" works in conjunction with the TV studio to produce the TV postings shown "looping" on our TV monitors located in the main office and cafeteria. The postings include information about school activity, school news, meetings, Diversity Awareness, Word of the Week, and a plethora of school related information. The students design the entire Power Point presentation from start to finish under the guidance of Mr. David Emery. Interested students should speak to their homeroom teacher or Mr. Emery for more information.

Community Service Projects

Winter Celebration Service Project

Chestnutwold Elementary School's annual **Service Learning Project, in partnership with the Salvation Army, is scheduled for Thursday, December 20, 2018.** For the three weeks leading into winter break, our school will participate in various activities that promote two important themes: generosity and the spirit of giving. Chestnutwold Elementary School wants to recognize and extend our generosity to those who may not have or have had the same opportunities.

Each Monday during the month of December on the morning announcements, teachers and students will introduce a story and theme related to the Chestnutwold Character Kids program and the spirit of giving. The theme will be at the center of our community meetings and diverse activities across the school for that week. The stories and themes will link together all activity from across the school and grades.

Students will also write stories, record songs, design packages, and package items for distribution to a local charity. Each grade has a role in the program.

Our service-learning project closes with our students preparing individual packages for children and families in need. Each package will contain student made gifts, including a CD recording of our choral music students, written cards and notes, and a collection of items donated by our extended school community. (Donations are being accepted as per the list included with this letter).

Families are invited to join Chestnutwold as our students make and then package their crafts. This activity is scheduled for Thursday, December 20, 2018, and will take place in the Cafeteria/LGI starting at about 1:45 PM.

Chestnutwold will conclude our holiday celebration with our **Holiday Celebration sing-a-long ritual on Friday, December 21, 2018**, starting near 2:00 PM. All students are invited to attend.

Philanthropic efforts

In keeping with the Chestnutwold Community's bucket filling campaign we are requesting students to donate items off a list provided to us from the

Ardmore Food Pantry to fill the “bucket,” literally, of those in need in our community. The receiving charity, the Ardmore Pantry, is located in our school’s neighborhood.

Our partnerships include: St. Joseph’s University, Ardmore Pantry, Senior Center at Brookline, Salvation Army, Operation Gratitude, Villanova University, Havertown Parks and Recreation, and more.

** Please contact Mr. Joel DiBartolomeo if you are interested in learning more about any of the information included in the Chestnutwold Elementary School handbook.*