



Hamilton School Student and Parent Handbook

2019-2020

Hamilton School
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Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District

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Welcome Letter

Dear Hamilton School Families,

Welcome to the new school year at Hamilton! I look forward to a wonderful year of exciting learning. Our school staff is eager to assist each child on his or her educational journey. We pride ourselves on being responsive to student needs and committed to the well-being of each member of our school community. It is my wish that all children in our school realize their full learning potential during the coming school year.

The Hamilton School Student/Parent Handbook will assist your family in becoming familiar with specific organizational information regarding our school. It will also outline the expectations that we have for students. I encourage families to carefully review and discuss this document. Should you have any questions about a school procedure or expectation, please contact me.

I look forward to working with you as a partner in your child's education.

Sincerely,
Daniel J. Fonder, Principal

Important District Notes:

Over the course of each school year, the Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District Board of Education updates and adopts [policies](#). In the event that the policy number referenced in the handbook is not accurate, please visit the school website to access the new policy numbers and any additional information that was not available when our handbook was published. We encourage parents to visit the district website regularly to ensure that they have the most current information. <http://brrsd.org/>

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of student records. Records are defined by FERPA. It also provides parents/legal guardians with the following rights:

To request and inspect their child's records.

To request to amend the record if they believe it to be inaccurate.

To disallow any disclosure of directory information.

To file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education regarding district's failure to comply with FERPA.

PUPIL RECORDS

Parents, legal guardians, and adult students have a right to access pupil records. To learn about the procedure to inspect pupil records please refer to BRRSD Board of Education Pupil Records Policy #8330 or contact the school principal. Health and Special Education records are maintained separately from the student academic record file.

Attendance

BRRSD's Attendance Requirements Policy is in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25 and should be reviewed by each family. Below you will find some general procedures for Hamilton School that support District Policy.

Whenever a child is absent for any reason, parents are requested to notify Hamilton School via [online form](#), before 8:00 AM that morning. Please provide your name, your child's name, the grade level, teacher's name, the date of absence, and the reason for the absence (as well as duration, if known). If unable to, parents should call the school and leave a message with the same information. ***Please note that if you call it is necessary for you to send in a hard copy note when your child returns to school.*** This written record of the reason for an absence is necessary even if a phone call has been made. Online is encouraged because it serves as both the immediate notification of absence and the written documentation for absence reporting.

If a child is absent and the school has not been notified by 9 AM, every effort will be made to contact a parent or relative to determine the location of the child.

When a parent wishes to have a child excused before the close of the school day, notification should be given to the school in advance. Unless an emergency situation arises, parents should communicate the need to pick up a child before the beginning of the school day to minimize interruptions to instruction.

Whenever a student leaves early, the sign out sheet in the Main Office must be signed by the parent/guardian. Children may not leave the building with a friend or neighbor unless permission is received in writing from a parent/guardian. The adult signing the child out from school must identify himself/herself to verify he/she is the person that is supposed to be taking the child from the school.

Behavior

Appropriate behavior is crucial in fostering an environment conducive to learning. All students must behave in a way that is safe and allows for all to learn. Hamilton School uses our school rules, ROAR, to teach students appropriate and expected behavior.

ROAR*

**Respect to All; Obey Safety Rules; Act Responsibly; Ready to Learn*

Hamilton School uses school-wide ROAR Rules. Students will learn these rules throughout the school building. We will hear them 'roar' as they follow this each day:

- Respect to All
- Obey Safety Rules
- Act Responsibly
- Ready to Learn

The [ROAR Matrix](#) shows how ROAR applies to different parts of the school day.

Discipline Chart

The [Hamilton School Discipline Chart](#) is designed to inform parents about consequences for different types of misbehavior that have been broken into three categories- mild, moderate, and severe.

Bus Rider Information

Bridgewater-Raritan School District Policy

New Jersey State Law: Chapter 18A: 25-2 states:

The driver shall be in full charge of the school bus at all times and shall be responsible for order; he/she shall never exclude a pupil from the bus, but if unable to manage any pupil, shall report the unmanageable pupil to the principal of the school he/she attends. A pupil may be excluded from the bus for disciplinary reasons by the principal. His/her parents shall provide his/her transportation to and from school during the period of such exclusion.

Emergency Bus Passes

The request for an emergency bus pass must be made for a compelling reason, such as a death in the family, sudden family illness, accident, etc. A written request from the parent/guardian must be submitted and approved by the school office. Whenever possible, the request should be submitted at least one day in advance. The child will be picked up or left at existing stops on the route. No additional stops will be made.

Classroom Celebrations: Student Health and Allergies

In order to adhere to the district Wellness Policy, requirements of the State of New Jersey and the District Life Threatening Food Allergy Protocol, the BRRSD school district will not permit sugar-based food items (i.e. cupcakes, donuts, cakes, etc.) at any celebratory functions. As a district, our goal is to create a culture that promotes a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle. In doing so, our schools encourage celebrations where the distribution and sharing of food is not required. We, as a district, do not want to ostracize nor put any student with allergies at risk. For that reason, brief celebrations for students generally occur one time per month and adhere to the BRRSD Wellness Guidelines. These guidelines and policies can be found on the district website below.

<https://www.straussesmay.com/seportal/Public/DistrictPolicy.aspx?policyid=8505&search=wellness&id=8acebdd88a964db59812ae654998172d>

Celebrations may vary by grade level and building, however food is **not** permitted as part of the birthday celebrations. Parents should not distribute edible items to students. Furthermore, party goody bags are not permitted for class distribution.

Pending permission by the teacher(s), birthday recognition may include special recognition in the classroom. This may include the student having a special job or title for the day, singing a birthday song, and/or a read-aloud story by the student, teacher, or an adult family member. Generally the celebration is 10-15 minutes in length.

Holiday celebrations may occur up to four times per school year. Food may be served at these celebrations, but cannot be sugar-based.

Note: As a general rule, private party/celebration invitations will not be distributed at school. The teacher can provide a list of names of students in the class. A parent may request that a teacher allow the distribution of invitations in class only if-

- o Distribution of the invitations will not be a disruption to the educational environment.
- o All students in the class will receive an invitation.

Dress Code

School dress is important in the daily education environment and is a statement of mutual respect among members of our learning community. It is clear that some types of clothing which are completely appropriate for recreation wear, sports, leisure time, beach, etc., are not suitable for school. Please note that the Dress Code applies to all students in all grades. Bare backs or midriffs, exposed undergarments, and clothing with offensive wording or drawings are not acceptable. The school reserves the right to require changes in dress that is deemed inappropriate for school wear. Parents may be contacted and asked to assist by bringing a change of clothing to school.

All students are required to wear appropriate footwear for recess and Physical Education class. It is important to note that sneakers are required for Physical Education class. For recess, sneakers are highly recommended. Students will not be able to participate in all recess activities if the footwear is not safe. "Backless" shoes (e.g., flip flops) can cause accidents and are not recommended.

Excuses from Physical Education Classes

Children are required to participate in all physical education activities and to dress properly for indoor and outdoor classes. Physical education teachers are responsible for the health and safety of all students.

Parents should encourage their children to actively engage in all activities and lessons. Excuses from participation will be granted upon a physician's request

and re-entry into active participation in physical education class will be allowed only upon the physician's written notification. Generally, excuses from physical education can only be allowed by doctor's note or extenuating circumstance. In most cases, if a child is well enough to be in school, a child is well enough to participate in classes. If a child is excused, he or she will still attend Physical Education class and will observe the lesson and activity.

Some students may be fearful of doing something new. Physical Education teachers exhibit understanding in encouraging students to learn something new. If a student has a concern, the parent/guardian is encouraged to communicate with the physical education teacher.

Fund Raising

Any solicitation of students or teachers/staff for the purpose of fundraising, is prohibited unless approved as a service learning project by the principal. The staff voluntarily participates in community programs and may support causes, but do not participate in any activity that detracts from the accomplishment of the school's primary educational goals.

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB)

The Board prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a student on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on school buses and, as appropriate, in other instances away from school grounds active or passive support for acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying is also prohibited.

Definition (see N.J. Public Law 2010, Chapter 122):

Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by an actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability or by any other distinguishing characteristics that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus or off school grounds that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:

- a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property;
- has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to cause disruption in or interference with, the orderly operation of the school; or
- creates a hostile educational environment for the students; or
- infringes on the rights of the student at school by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

Expected Behavior:

The district prohibits active or passive support for acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Students are encouraged to support other students who walk away from these acts when they see them, constructively attempt to stop them, and report acts to the building principal or designee. Each building principal will develop and provide a school-based program for appropriate recognition for positive reinforcement for good conduct, self-discipline, good citizenship, and academic success.

The Board expects students to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment. The Board believes that standards for student behavior must be based on parent/guardian, student, and community involvement producing an environment that encourages students to grow in self-discipline.

Parent Information

Before and After School Supervision

Buses and vans are boarded and typically leave the curb in front of the school by 3:00 each day. Once students are dismissed, there is no school district supervision either inside the school or outside on the playground. Best Time LLC operates an aftercare program on-site which is privately owned and not under the direction of the Board of Education. The Board of Education has provided the space by permit, in the same way other approved groups use the building. The students enrolled in aftercare report directly to the designated area and are then under the supervision of Best Time Aftercare employees. Parents/guardians picking up children at dismissal time are expected to arrive on time (2:45 pm).

Parent Drop-off and Pick-up:

The school is available ten minutes before arrival and dismissal times to provide a reasonable window for parents who are dropping a student off or picking a student up for routine arrival and dismissal.

- **Arrival-** Students disembark buses and proceed to classrooms at 8:25. Parents who are dropping off their child (children) should plan to arrive between 8:15 and 8:25. Students dropped off by a parent and entering school after 8:35 are marked tardy. Unless the student is coming to school for a pre-arranged meeting with a teacher or staff member, parents should plan to arrive at school after 8:15.
- **Dismissal-** The school-wide dismissal announcement is made by 2:50 each day. Parents who are picking up their child (or children) should plan to arrive at 2:45. Generally, a phone call will be made if the parent has not arrived by 3:05. Unless the student is being picked up before the end of the school day, parents should not arrive before 2:40 pm.
- **Kindergarten-** The same procedure applies to the half day kindergarten program. Parents picking-up from morning kindergarten should arrive between 11:05 and 11:15. Parents dropping-off for afternoon kindergarten should arrive between 12:05 and 12:15.

Parking

The Hamilton School parking lot must be available for school staff members. Each numbered space is specifically designated for a teacher or other school staff member. Parents/Guardians/Visitors should not park in a reserved numbered space between 6 am and 4 pm on any school day. The numbered spaces are open for use during night events or weekend events unless otherwise noted.

- **Parents parking for drop-off during arrival (8:15- 8:35)** should use the playground blacktop area, visitor spaces near the main entrance, and the gravel auxiliary parking on either side of the exit ramp.
- **Parents parking during the school day (8:35- 2:40)** should use the designated visitor spaces near the main entrance or the gravel parking areas.
- **Parents parking for pick-up during dismissal (2:40- 3:00)** should use the visitor spaces near the main entrance or the gravel parking areas.
Note: The after care programs use the playground blacktop area with the students after 3:00 each afternoon, so please drive carefully.

Exceptions for children remaining after dismissal:

- For students staying to help or work with a teacher, the parents must be notified beforehand and arrangements must be made for the students to be picked up.
- For students staying for an after-school day activity, such as scouts, the parents supervising these activities must arrive at school by dismissal time to provide supervision of the students.
- Students attending the Hamilton School Tiger Club activities sponsored by the PTO must report directly to the activity and be met by the instructor and/or PTO volunteer.
- All other students are to leave the building and school grounds immediately upon dismissal as there is no supervision available and children should not be left unsupervised.

Safe Schools

The Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District is committed to maintaining a safe school environment for all students. To this end, we ask that you read the Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District Weapons policy with your child and discuss its implications as it is related to your child's developmental level/age.

The various items that are often defined as weapons would not necessarily be considered weapons by all of us. With this in mind, be aware of the items that are considered weapons and not acceptable for students to have in school. Toy weapons must not be brought to school.

School Nurse

The school nurse's responsibilities include providing or assisting in both the informal and formal classroom health education; individual health counseling for students and staff, visual, auditory, growth, and scoliosis screening of students; and the evaluation of physical complaints as well as the administration of first aid as deemed necessary.

Potential problems that are detected as a result of screenings will be reported to parents by letter, accompanied by a request for a follow-up report from the family physician or attending physician. Children who show signs of illness will be sent to the nurse's office. The nurse must see all children with injuries to the head, back, or neck, and the parents will be notified. Children with a fever will not remain in school.

Due to the possibility of a child becoming ill or injured during school hours, it is essential that parent/guardians provide the school with one or more emergency numbers so that every effort may be made to contact the parent/guardian. Cell phone numbers and work telephone numbers may be used as contact numbers.

The school nurse will administer medication to a student as prescribed by the student's physician, and requested in writing by the parent. All prescription medications must be stored in their original prescription containers, and must include the original label displaying the student's name, the name of the medication, dosage, and frequency of administration. For safety reasons, parents should personally deliver medication to the school nurse.

The school nurse must review each child's immunization status, and the immunizations must be in compliance with the District standards as mandated by law. Any parents/guardians having concerns regarding their child's health status are requested to contact the school nurse: 908-575-0050, ext. 8205. The school nurse is an in-school resource for any questions regarding your child.

Student Cell Phone Usage

Cell phones and other mobile devices are a potential distraction to the learning environment and should not be used during the school day. Students needing to call home for any reason should speak to an adult staff member and use a school phone.

Visitors to the School

All visitors to the school must first identify themselves and their reason for visit via the door buzzer located at the main entrance. They then must report to the Main Office to speak with a secretary and provide additional information. All visitors must sign-in/sign-out, wear Visitor identification, and must leave car keys or a similar item in the office as a reminder to return the Visitor identification. Please be patient when visiting the school as we check-in other visitors.