

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



## Who we are

*Chestnutwold school community members are empowered to be a collective group of continuous learners who are dedicated to providing elite academic and affective growth opportunities for all stakeholders. Chestnutwold Elementary School is committed to helping our students, families, teachers, and community flourish. We prioritize the development of knowledge, skills, and well-being. We are mindful, aware, and attuned to our context; we seek understanding. Each person in our school is valued for his/her contributions to the realization of our District's mission ~ inspire life-long learning. Rule number 6 is an important component of who we are...*

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- District webpages can be found using this address:  
<https://www.haverford.k12.pa.us/>
- School webpages can be found using this address:  
<https://www.haverford.k12.pa.us/home-chestnutwold>

## ***Back to School Night is Thursday, September 19, 2019***

### **Opening day of school and school hours**

- The first day of school for students in Grades 1 - 5 is Tuesday, September 3, 2019.
- Kindergarten students will participate in an Orientation on Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, and will begin a regular schedule on Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup>.
- The school day for students in grades 1 - 5 is 8:45 am to 3:30 pm. Students begin entering the building starting at 8:35 am.
  - + Kindergarten: am Session - 8:45am - 11:25am  
pm Session - 12:50pm - 3:30pm
- *There is no adult supervision on school grounds before 8:30 am or after 3:40 pm. Please, do not leave your child anywhere on school grounds unsupervised.*

### **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 8:30 am. Children should not be left unattended on school grounds before 8:30 am.
- All students and parents/guardians are asked to remain outside or in the front vestibule until the 8:35 am bell, unless they have a pre-arranged appointment. *Not before 8:30 am.*
- **Students may enter the building using any of the following entrances**

- Rear doors (car lane, kindergarten playground/parking lot)
- Belmont Avenue (bus lane)
- Lorraine Street (front entrance)
- 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/guardians in grades kindergarten through second may walk their child or children to class in the morning until Friday, September 6th.** Take a photo of your child entering school, write a note for his/her 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 Monday, September 9<sup>th</sup>,** all 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/guardians 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 **MUST** 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.
- Changes to a students' regular dismissal plans must be received by the homeroom teacher or front office in writing: note, email, or fax. Our 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 to their parent/guardians or school.
  - Reminder: Supervision is not scheduled after 3:30 pm.
- We will not honor a change in dismissal plans unless a parent/guardian communicates the change in writing (note, email, or fax) – 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” or non-emergency contact cannot take a student from school without a written note from the parent/guardian.
  - The accompanying adult must have a photo ID, if not a driver’s license.
- School grounds are reserved for Chestnutwold students during school hours and until 4:00. Signs are posted. Thank you.
- **Student dismissal exits – Where to meet your child...**
  - Kindergarten, first, and fifth grades exit the rear doors; kindergarten playground/parking lot area
  - Second, third, and fourth grades exit the Belmont Avenue doors

### **Absences and tardy**

- Please see the Haverford School District Board attendance policy regarding absences and lateness. **A note is required within three days when your 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 form. Complete this form and return it to our office up to 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.**
  - Approval cannot be granted once the trip has passed.

- The HSD attendance policy can be found here (**IMPORTANT**):  
<https://www.haverford.k12.pa.us/departments/departments-of-pupil-services/attendance>
- The School District of Haverford Township has established the following reasons for an excused absence from school:
  - Personal illness
  - Quarantine
  - Death in the immediate family
  - Observance of religious holidays
  - School sponsored activities
  - Out of school suspension
  - Approved planned absences
- To report absences, you can use the Safe Arrival app found at this address:  
<https://www.haverford.k12.pa.us/departments/departments-of-pupil-services/attendance>
- Late arrival to school requires a written note from a parent/guardian or the tardy will be unexcused. Please see our School Board policy found using the above 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.
- Students are expected to be in homeroom by 8:45 am. If a child arrives after 8:45 am, she or he should report to the school office before reporting to their respective homeroom; a tardy will be recorded.
- 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 see our district policy found using the above link.)

## **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 our other students.
- At least two adults are stationed at three entrances during arrival (Lorraine, Belmont, and rear parking lot).
  - Kindergarten walkers and drivers should enter through the kindergarten playground entrance in the rear parking lot.
- Students arriving after the 8:45am bell must report to the school office where they will “sign-in” their child/student.

### **11:25am - Dismissal for am Students**

- A teacher or instructional assistant will escort student “walkers” out of the building to the kindergarten playground area or bus.
- Parent/guardians should be waiting to meet their child, as per the dismissal arrangements provided by the family.
- A teacher or an instructional assistant will escort bus students to their bus.
- If an am kindergarten student must be **picked up by car**, parent/guardians 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. 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 12:50 pm - 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 12:50 pm 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 on school grounds between 10:50 am and 1:30 pm. Please, drive carefully!**

#### **3:30pm - Dismissal for PM Students**

- A teacher or classroom assistant will escort kindergarten “walkers” out the kindergarten playground doors (rear parking lot area). Parent/guardians should wait in that area 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, students in kindergarten through fifth grade are then escorted 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; most often in the Cafeteria.
- If a pm kindergarten student must be picked up by car, parent/guardians 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

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phone call. Fax phone number: (610) 853 - 5979 (fax). In an emergency,  
please call the school office at (610) 853 – 5900, 8000.

**2019 – 2020 School Year**  
**Kindergarten reporting schedule**  
**Half-day student dismissal information**

Date	Day	Grades 1 - 5	K	Reporting K
October 31	Thursday	11:50	11:30	am reports
November 25 *	Monday	11:50	11:50	pm reports
November 26 *	Tuesday	11:50	11:30	am reports
November 27 *	Wednesday	11:50	11:50	pm reports
January 17	Friday	11:50	11:30	am reports
February 14	Friday	11:50	11:50	pm reports
March 11 *	Wednesday	11:50	11:30	am reports
March 12 *	Thursday	11:50	11:50	pm reports
March 13 *	Friday	11:50	11:30	am reports
May 29	Friday	11:50	11:50	pm reports
Tuesday, June 16, 2020 - Kindergarten students' last day				
Wednesday, June 17, 2020, Grades 1 - 5 student last day Kindergarten does not report.				



### **Trimester, Report Card and District Testing dates**

	Trimester ends	Report cards	Conferences
T1	11/29/19	12/11/19	11/25/19 – 11/27/19
T2	2/28/20	3/11/20	3/11/20 – 3/13/20
T3	6/17/20	6/17/20	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 3, 2020 starts at 7:00 pm

Registration (Kindergarten): February 18, 2020

Registration (Grades 1-5): Year Round

### **PSSA**

2020 PSSA testing window: [April 20, 2020, to May 1, 2020](#).

Please schedule vacations around the PSSA dates. Confirmed school testing dates (days) will be sent in April of 2020 in preparation for the PSSA. The testing window is shown below for your convenience:

Language Arts (Three days)	Grades 3, 4, and 5	April 20 - 24, 2020
Math (Two days)	Grades 3, 4, and 5	April 27 – May 1, 2020
Science (Two days)	G4 only	April 27 – May 1, 2020
Make up testing	As needed	April 27 – May 1, 2020

### **Transportation**

*Respect the procedures. They are for everyone.*

*Drive like your kid goes to school here.*

### **IMPORTANT: General driving-around-school items**

- 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 (basketball court or lined parking spaces). You may park on the basketball court during arrival and dismissal, but NOT between 10:40 and 1:30.
- 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.

- There is no parking along the Lorraine sidewalk of the school. Traffic laws and the rights of our neighbors prohibit parking or stopping on the school side of Loraine Street at any time.
- 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.
- 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.

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**

### **FAQ notes**

- 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.
- 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 two locations: cafeteria and stairwell. You can come to the office, sign-in, and visit the lost and found between 8:30 am to 11:00 am, or 2:00 pm to 3:15 pm.
  - 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/guardian retrieves it. Often, these are the source of conflict due to misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

## **Additional considerations 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
  - First offense: the device will be taken, family contact will be made by person who took the device, and it will be returned at the end of the day
  - Second offense: parent/guardian/guardian must come to school to retrieve it
  - Third offense: parent/guardian/guardian must come to school to retrieve it
  - Fourth offense: it will be held until the end of the trimester, and a parent/guardian/guardian must come to school to retrieve it
- 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

## **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 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/guardian 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 Food Brought into the Building**

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

Here is the address to our District's food policy:

<https://www.haverford.k12.pa.us/departments/coordinated-school-health/food-allergy-policy>

Please access 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
- Read a favorite book to your child's class
- Donate 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
- Teach the class a simple craft, art activity or game
- Provide a small token gift to each classmate in honor of your child's birthday
- 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 comply with the District's Safe Foods' List.

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## **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 address here:

<https://www.haverford.k12.pa.us/home-chestnutwold/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, 2017, and 2018, Chestnutwold was recognized by different organizations for our work in character education. We have been recognized for delivering “promising practices,” among other accolades, that align to meaningful character programming for our students, teachers, and families. We are excited to build on this honor by adding our recent National School of Character recognition. Opportunities like these are the foundation of our work.

In 2018, our school was recognized as a “School of Kindness” for how we foster a culture of belonging and compassion. The programs that have earned us these awards had been in place for several years now, and have improved over time, as evidenced by these honors and our school culture.

In 2016, Chestnutwold adopted six ChCK Traits (Chestnutwold Character Kids 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.

Over the years, Chestnutwold has developed partnerships with various organizations across the region to help us develop and strengthen the programming we offer our students. Here is a short list to name a few: our parents; district personnel; Several 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.

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.

## Grade Level Teams

<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>First Grade</b>	<b>Second Grade</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Christie Merschel</li> <li>• Miss Linsay Mirigliani</li> <li>• Mrs. Katie Gretchen – Sp. Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Maggie Bieter</li> <li>• Mrs. Nicole Meagher</li> <li>• Miss Christine LaBrasca</li> <li>• Mrs. Nicole Tallon</li> <li>• Ms. Kristin Michiels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Krista Magdy</li> <li>• Ms. Nicole McKeown</li> <li>• Mrs. Patricia Campbell</li> <li>• Mrs. Lisa McCusker</li> </ul>
<b>Third Grade</b>	<b>Fourth Grade</b>	<b>Fifth Grade</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Mike Reynolds</li> <li>• Mrs. AnnMarie Krier</li> <li>• Mrs. Betsy Montgomery</li> <li>• Mrs. Kim McEntee</li> <li>• Mrs. Hannah Callahan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. MaryLou Meehan (Math and Science)</li> <li>• Mrs. Jen Strawley (ELA)</li> <li>• Mrs. Moira Barker (Math and Science)</li> <li>• Mrs. Kellie Lucas (ELA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Natascha Doeller (ELA)</li> <li>• Mrs. Rachel Pomerantz (Math and Science)</li> <li>• Mrs. Erin Oelkers (ELA)</li> <li>• Mr. Kevin Patterson (Math and Science)</li> </ul>
<b>Special Education</b>	<b>Specialists</b>	<b>Humanities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• G1/2 Supplemental: Mrs. Amy Martin</li> <li>• G3 Supplemental: Mrs. Becky Sabin</li> <li>• G4/5 MA and G4 ELA: Mrs. Renee Wroblewski</li> <li>• G5 ELA Christine Teti</li> <li>• Academic Support: Mrs. Maria Haldeman</li> <li>• Academic Support: Ms. Christine Teti</li> </ul>	Reading Specialists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Tina Reynolds</li> <li>• Mrs. Lisa Neri</li> </ul> Speech and Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Linda Dapkunas</li> </ul> Occupational Therapist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Petra Ludewig</li> </ul> School Psychologist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Catherine Chaloult</li> </ul> School Nursing Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. “Terri” Gallagher</li> <li>• Mrs. Marianne Hooper-Capuzzi</li> </ul> Technology support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. David Emery</li> </ul>	Library <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Jayne Dambman</li> </ul> Music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Laura Esposto</li> </ul> Art <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Kate Kasmer</li> </ul> PE/Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Tim Kershaw</li> </ul>

## **Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Character, and School Compact National School of Character**

SEL is one a school priority. Evidence of our work in this area is on display everywhere in our school. The Chestnutwold community has been recognized by several national organizations for the meaningful and effective SEL programming we delivery 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 student trusts that those around him/her believe in him/her and provide an empowering context.

### **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 (ChCK 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 developing and attending to these traits can help them perform better in the following ways: strengthen self- and self-other regulation; improve self- and self-other relationships; building a stronger and safer learning environment; develop

virtue and will-power; help students achieve in our school and in their respective area of interest; and help them in their pursuits of life-long learning.

## **School Community Theme 2019 – 2020**

### **Chestnutwold, Be a “weaver.”**

#### **School Theme for 2019 – 2020**

Each year, Chestnutwold selects a book for all students and staff to read as a vehicle to promote school community and the nurturing of good character. Evidence of this work will be visible in our classrooms and corridors. You will also see it in our STEAM programming, assemblies, classroom lessons, meetings and day-to-day interactions. This year’s book is Mac Barnett’s: *Extra Yarn*, which can be found by copying the following address into your web browser:

<https://www.macbarnett.com/extra-yarn>.

Similar to past years, we will bring the book’s allegory, ideas, and lessons to life. Throughout the year teachers and students will make connections among the book, our ChCK Traits (Chestnutwold Character Kid Traits), and various classroom and school activities. In meetings, discussions, and assemblies, for example, students will engage and grapple with the themes conveyed in *Extra Yarn*. A sample of the themes we will explore this year include: relationship building; strengthening community; keeping a positive attitude; and having fortitude and purpose. Everyone is invited to help *weave* our school’s ChCK Traits through our school community.

#### **A few words about Extra Yarn...**

The story centers on a young girl and a seemingly ordinary box of yarn. Together, they ignite the remarkable transformation of a colorless and sleepy town. Annabelle, the main character and heroine, is on a walk through town when she comes across a box. The box is filled with an assortment of brightly colored yarn. What is the heroine’s reaction? What will she do with this *chance*? She knits herself a sweater. When she looks into the box after finishing, to her surprise, she discovers that there’s more yarn! So, she knits a sweater for her dog. After seeing her dog

dressed in vivid colors, she again looks into the box and sees that there is still more yarn. Wow! What are the *possibilities*?

Annabelle and her dog walk through town with her box of yarn in hand. Dressed in their newly knitted colorful clothing, she and her dog walk past other community members who stare and tease. How does she react? Annabelle does what I know our Chestnutwold students would do: She knits sweaters for them too! And slowly the town, just like our *Phoenix*, is reborn. The town, like the heroine, blossom into a beacon of courage, hope, and understanding.

Soon, a villainous Duke appears. The Duke offers Annabelle riches for her box of yarn. Despite the tempting offer, Annabelle remains content to weave *color* into the lives of her community and its members. She is, in both the literal and figurative way, a *weaver*. You will need to read the rest of the story to learn what happens next, but I imagine you can anticipate the ending.

We invite all of you to join in our effort to deliver high quality character lessons into our instructional program. Ask your child when he/she has been engaged in a learning experience that might refer back to the themes in *Extra Yarn*, or our ChCK Traits. Discuss where they “see Annabelle” in our school, or evidence of her intentions. Help them understand how they too can develop the traits evident in any of the characters, and more importantly, how they can nurture those traits that transformed an unsuspecting young person into a community “weaver.”

### **You can help us develop young “weavers”**

We invite all of you to join in our effort this year. Talk to your child about community meeting time, or when him/her has been engaged in a learning experience that referred back to the themes in *Extra Yarn*, or our ChCK Traits. Discuss where they “see Annabelle” in our school, or evidence of her intentions. Help them understand how they too can develop the traits evident in any of the characters, and more importantly, how they can nurture those traits closest to those that transformed an unsuspecting young person into a community “weaver.”

## **I am Wall**

The “I Am...” wall is designed to promote intangible qualities or strengths we see in ourselves and want to share with our school community – to nurture a sense of pride in who “I Am.” We want our students 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 a character trait. The statement is designed to promote or “shatter” something about him/herself that the (I Am) author feels strongly. We want to engage students in reflective thinking about self-efficacy, dignity, and agency.

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.

## **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 work collaboratively in academically and developmentally appropriate activities six to eight times during the school year. Meetings are scheduled during classroom meeting time and center on reading, "Reading Buddy" partners remain in tact for the year.

Teachers and students work to strengthen the relationships through these activities. This idea is intended to build and promote school community by developing relationships across our school. Activities are designed to include both the older and younger student. writing, culturally relevant topics, and/or community building. They connect to the Chestnutwold Character Kid program adopted by Chestnutwold in 2014.

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**

A goal in our school is to promote a collaborative process where students, teachers, and faculty work together to support well-being, personal growth, and school culture.

*Our School Compact is the primary 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 virtuous character. Further, we want to extinguish behaviors before they become destructive, disruptive, and/or harmful to others or the student. We rely on the experiences as learning experiences, as disruptive or unwanted they may be. We want each community member to learn from these experiences – all experiences so they learn about themselves and how they can manage their personal responsibility. We want them to understand and apply strategies that will help them contribute to our school community and its environment in positive ways. We want to empower them to rely on the agency that is their right. Moreover, the student will learn and engage in practices that restore the environment.*

The process will always be fair.

Non-negotiable protocols for our School Compact are:

Students, teachers, and faculty will work in collaboration to: (1) attune to their self and interactions, (2) act with self- and self-other regulation and management of self- and self-other relations, (3) behave with tolerance and maintain dignity of self and others, (4) seek understanding, and (5) develop independence.

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 to ensure our school community is a fair and 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. The program's 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. 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.

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## **School Discipline and Restoring the Environment**

We believe in helping our students work through challenges so they can learn, develop, and practice appropriate social and emotional skills. Further, so that when they engage in unexpected or inappropriate behavior, they understand the importance that they restore the matter, but also that they have the skills and knowledge to do so. 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, which is a tool in our Behavior Compact, 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.

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## **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 – 21<sup>st</sup> Century Programming**

Chestnutwold prides itself on being a 21<sup>st</sup> Century School. We equip each student, kindergarten through fifth grade, with the prerequisite Science – Technology – Engineering – Art/Design – Math knowledge and skills needed to succeed in their academic and life pursuits. 21<sup>st</sup> Century programming is delivered in classrooms, our Library classes, and in school-wide Inquiry Based Learning (IBL) problems that rely heavily on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills identified by researchers such as: Wagner, Hattie, Fullan, Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, and STEM Ecosystems. 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning is one of the pillars in our school's framework (along with Character Education, core academic instruction, and our culture).

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 21<sup>st</sup> Century knowledge-based workforce. Classrooms are transformed into creative learning spaces where students learn coding, 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.

Below you will find a preview/outline of this year's work. As always, parents are invited to participate in our IBL study in various ways, including, but not limited to: presentations, workshops, project management, facilitating workshops, etc. Invitations for partnerships will be extended through the year. Should you have a desire to support/volunteer in an area shown in the below schedule, please contact your homeroom teacher or me.

**Inquiry Based Problem of study in each grade for 2019 – 2020 is based around ecological study.**

Our design process: *Ask It, Solve It, Design It, Test It, and Improve It*

<b>K</b>	<b>Where does our trash go? Why do we recycle and can we build something for our classroom to assist us with our snack trash?</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>What is a habitat? How can we design a habitat to support our millipedes?</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>How might we design and build a butterfly garden that helps the Monarch butterflies live, grow and hatch their babies?</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>What can we do to help bees survive and thrive?</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>What effect do humans have on birds and their habitats?</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>How do we design and build a greenhouse that supports research and experiments to determine the effects of acid rain on plant growth?</b>

### **Fall (September through December)**

**Overall:** Research and build prerequisite skills and schema

- Research ecology and its various branches of study
- Develop essential problem around one ecology concern: What do you wonder about ecology?
- Research the problem

### **Winter (January through April)**

**Overall:** Apply research to problem

- Design solution
- Create a solution framework and
- Design model (Experts in the classroom)
- Test it (Experts in the classroom)
- Assessment and rubric design

### **Spring (April through June)**

**Overall:** Improve design, prepare for presentations, and present to an audience

- Apply new information to solution framework
- Design model
- Test model
- Present

### **Peer Groups Program, Mentoring/Building Leadership**

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 in one of our various groups to “get their engine started,” or develop the social-emotional virtues and skills we promote in our school.

Chestnutwold’s Peer Group Programs is a collection of various small groups in place to support the social emotional development of our students. In each setting, students from across grades work in team building and leadership activity.

Students are recommended for one of these groups based on their need in our school environment. Given our finite resources, space is limited. Students will be identified in late September so they can begin working with Mr. Kershaw, Mrs. Sabin, Ms. Munch, or Miss Huston in October. Grade level teams

(1 – 5) will identify students from across their respective grade level. Groups meet from 8:50 to 9:10 two to three days per week, starting the first week of October.

### **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 collected donations or volunteered to work with Make-A-Wish Foundation, Ardmore Pantry, 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**

Chestnutwold joined elements of Kurt Hinson's recess Play Fit® program with our own evidence based programming to fit our school needs. Today, Mr. Kershaw, our recess monitors, students, and faculty understand and apply the principles of Chestnutwold's version of "Safe Play Recess."

Students are taught the activities and principles in a structured setting before playing in the more independent setting that is recess. Mr. Kershaw practices these games with our students in PE class and visits each grade level at recess periodically 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**

Conflict Mediators are present during each recess to help students settle common less tense conflicts that arise between peers. Ms. Jen Munch and Miss Jaclyn Huston, our school counselors, train 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 or Miss Huston for further investigation and follow up, where 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

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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 19, 2019**. 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.

Students will also write stories, record songs, design packages, and package items for distribution to a local charity. Each grade, every person in our school, is empowered to take 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 19, 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 19, 2019**, starting near 6:30 pm. All students are invited to attend.

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