



# **Primary School**

## **Parent and Student Handbook**

**2020-2021**

Updated September 2020

*We will teach Them, One and All...*

Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District  
836 Newmans Lane  
Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807  
Telephone: (908) 685-2777

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Bridgewater, NJ 08807  
Phone (908) 526-6440

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Bradley Gardens Primary School  
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9 Hamilton Lane  
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920  
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Mr. Daniel Fonder, Principal

JFK Primary School  
255 Woodmere Street  
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Mr. Joseph Walsh, Principal

Milltown Primary School  
611 Milltown Road  
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Bridgewater, NJ 08807  
Phone (908) 231-1220

Mr. George Rauh, Principal

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## Introduction

Welcome to the Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District Primary School Program. The primary years of education are some of the most important times in a child's life. At this stage, children are inquisitive, asking questions about and discovering their surroundings. During these years, a child will develop a love for learning that he or she can carry throughout a lifetime.

This parent and student handbook is designed to provide specific information related to the general primary schools' program. Please refer to this handbook for reference throughout the school year. If you are looking for information specific to the building, please visit the school webpage of the district website at [www.brrsd.org](http://www.brrsd.org). The staff at your child's school would be happy to assist you as well.

Families are encouraged to visit the district website at [www.brrsd.org](http://www.brrsd.org) to view Board-approved policies and regulations. These policies and regulations are the basis for the primary handbook. Please note that the Board of Education and Administration reserve the right to add, modify, and/or delete policies, regulations, and procedures described within this handbook as needed.

<b>Mission Statement</b>
We will teach them One and All Young to Old and Big to Small Inspire, engage and educate Improve our world and make it great Challenge All to grow, exceed So one day They will take the lead.
<b>Vision</b>
We value and engage all stakeholders through clear, effective, two-way communication in order to provide comprehensive, innovative, sustainable, research-based programs that efficiently leverage technology and effectively address the needs of all students within safe, challenging environments.
<b>Values</b>
In our district, we value: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• creative thinkers who curiously ask questions, judiciously take risks, and relentlessly tackle challenges.</li><li>• adaptable citizens who act with integrity and compassion, modeling excellence, courage, inclusion, and equity.</li><li>• responsible collaborators who hold themselves personally accountable for their words and actions.</li><li>• reflective, lifelong learners who passionately seek knowledge through critical and innovative thinking.</li><li>• enterprising individuals who ardently explore their own potential and willingly and continually enrich the world around them.</li></ul>

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## **Attendance**

Board [Policy](#) and [Regulation](#) 5200 – Attendance outlines requirements for student attendance at school as well as procedures for reporting absences. As absences from school interrupt learning, it is imperative that each student comes to school each day and arrives to school on time. As per policy, “The Board of Education believes that attendance is a key factor in student achievement. Therefore, absences from school should be avoided, and parents are requested to plan family vacations during school vacation periods. The Board recognizes, however, that there are some reasonable and legitimate reasons for students to be absent.” Accrual of excessive absences can impact your child’s status for promotion or graduation.

If your child must be absent from school, please notify the school that morning to report your child's absence. Identify your child by his or her full name, grade level, teacher, reason for absence, and expected length of absence. At the time your child returns to school, please send in writing a reason for the absence.

Whenever a parent call is not received about a student absence on the day of that absence, a call will be made to your home or to your workplace to verify your child's absence. It is extremely important to contact the school about any absence. We are concerned about your child's safety and wellbeing.

A student is considered late if they arrive after the start time of their session. Students who arrive to school tardy due to a late running school bus will not be penalized with a tardy record.

If you need to inform the school of any last minute changes to your child’s typical dismissal routine you must notify school personnel no later than 10:00 a.m. In the event of an emergency that occurs after 10:00 a.m., please call the main office of your child’s school to notify them of the situation. They will advise as to procedures for a change in dismissal.

## **Code of Conduct**

The Bridgewater Raritan Regional School District believes that students, parents, teachers, and administrators have rights and responsibilities. These responsibilities fall under the umbrella of policies and procedures known as Code of Conduct. Responsibilities are detailed in [Board Policy 5700](#), available on the district website under Board of Education Policies.

## **Communication with Staff**

### **Chain of Command**

Families are encouraged to maintain communication at each level. Student concerns should be addressed with the classroom teacher or other school staff as appropriate as the first level of contact. Should the results not be satisfactory, the family may then contact the building administrator. Following that contact, should additional concerns exist, the family may contact the appropriate central office administrator. The Superintendent of Schools should be contacted after following the outlined chain of command and only when a satisfactory result is not obtained at another level.

## **Communication Means**

School staff may communicate with families through a variety of means including, but not limited to, in-person meetings, telephone call, email, and written communication.

## **Response Time**

Families should expect to receive a response to an inquiry in 24 hours. Please note that, at times, it will take longer to get an answer or information. In this case, the initial response should be received in 24 hours with an indication of the length of time needed to obtain the response.

## **School Messenger**

The school district utilizes School Messenger to communicate information to families. Families are can log into School Messenger and choose the types of messages that go to each identified contact for that family. School Messenger information is available on the district website.

## **Webpages**

Staff members maintain webpages with information connected to classroom and school activities. Staff member webpages can be found by visiting the school's webpage.

## **Custody and Guardianship**

At times, families may experience delicate or difficult situations. Our staff will support families through their difficult times; however, school staff must obey the law regardless of how strongly a parent or guardian advocates for their child. It is incumbent upon the custodial parent or legal guardian to provide the school with copies of any legal documentation and stipulations with which the school is expected to comply. This includes, but is not limited to, court orders, power of attorney, restraining orders, and divorce decrees. Parents or guardians are responsible to provide the school staff with the most current legal documentation as well as keep them informed of any updates. Should you need to inform the school staff about a situation, notify in writing the building principal and your student's teacher.

Without legal documentation stating the contrary, school staff are legally bound to accord non-custodial parents the rights and privileges of custodial parents or court-appointed guardians unless specifically denied by legal intervention. It is incumbent upon non-custodial parent to contact the teacher with their requests for report cards and other communication. School staff will not become involved in family disputes. School staff must follow the law at all times.

## **Dress Code**

Board [Policy](#) and [Regulation](#) 5511 – Dress and Grooming outlines procedures for appropriate dress at school. The policy states, “Proper dress and attire is an important part of the school program. Students should display pride in their school and in themselves by coming to school in appropriate clothing. An individual's dress, personal appearance, and cleanliness, like his/her

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conduct, should reflect a sensitivity to and respect for others. The fact that the school will permit a wide variety in clothes does not mean that all styles are equally appropriate. The basis of judgment for appropriateness of dress shall be neatness, health, cleanliness, modesty, and good taste.”

### **Extra Help and Tutoring**

Board [Policy](#) and [Regulation](#) 3232 – Tutoring Services outlines procedures for staff to provide extra help to students beyond the classroom period as well as information regarding private tutoring. Students and families should be proactive in asking for extra help as needed.

### **Health Services**

#### **Health Office Staff**

The school nurse helps to ensure the health of your child while at school. The nurse’s responsibilities are varied and wide-ranging. The school nurse helps verify student absences, dispense medicines according to physicians' instructions, contacts family members when a child becomes ill or is injured at school, and provides dry clothes after accidents. The school nurse makes every effort to notify families when students visit the health office for true illness or when a concerning pattern of visits to the school nurse is identified. Whenever your child has a health concern that will impact his or her experiences at school, please inform the school nurse. You should always keep your child home if they are ill in the morning or have had a fever or vomited within the past 24 hours.

#### **Medications**

Whenever possible, medications should be taken at home rather than in school. However, there are times when your child’s physician may prescribe medication that needs to be taken during the school day. Students may not self-administer prescription or over-the-counter medication. The school nurse is the only staff member authorized to dispense medication.

Before your child may be given medication, the school nurse must receive a note from your child’s physician with a written order for the type and dosage of medication. The medication must be fully labeled, in its original container. The medication must be hand-delivered by an adult to the school. Please do not send the medication to school in your child’s backpack. The school nurse will secure the medication in the Health Office. Families may also choose to come to school and administer the medication themselves. This must take place in the Health Office.

#### **Physical Education Excuses**

Children participate in physical education three days per week. The classroom teacher will advise on which days the class has physical education instruction. Every child should be dressed appropriately for physical education class. Clothing which allows freedom of movement is suggested and sneakers or other rubber soled athletic shoes (aerobic style) are required to be worn by each student while in physical education class. Excuses from physical education are only be allowed by doctor’s note or special circumstances explained by the child’s parent or guardian. All physical education excuses must be channeled through the school nurse.

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## **Homework**

Board [Policy](#) and [Regulation](#) 2330 – Homework outlines procedures for the assignment of homework by grade level. It also identifies the assignment of homework connected to school breaks. Students and families are encouraged to engage in dialogue with the teacher(s) to ensure that the teacher is aware of each student’s progress through homework as well as any extenuating circumstances that might impact a student’s ability to complete assignments.

## **Lunch Program**

### **Lunch**

The school district contracts with Maschio’s Food Service for the school lunch program. A balanced meal is served each day to afford students the U.S. Government nutritional guidelines at the established price. A monthly lunch menu is designed by Maschio’s and is available on the district website.

Payment for Lunches. Students must pay for their lunches each day unless they are utilizing the Meal Pay Plus Program. Information about this program is available on the district website or by calling the school. Teachers will take a lunch count each morning at 8:40 a.m. and students should know what they are buying if they are purchasing a lunch. Families may consider prepaying online for lunches so that the child does not need to carry money to school. The cafeteria manager maintains records and the system will deduct the lunches as they are used. Children do not have to keep track of tickets.

Free and Reduced-Price Lunches. Free and reduced-price lunches will be available to children who qualify. Families wishing to apply must complete the on-line application and return it to the school office. Paper copies are available upon request. All information provided on the form is kept confidential. Applications are processed during the first week of school. They can also be filed at any time during the school year. The school Board office determines the eligibility according to federal income guidelines. Eligible students are not identified in any way during the purchasing procedures.

Please report food allergies to the school nurse.

### **Recess**

Students are afforded recess time each during around the scheduled lunch period. Recess will take place outside, weather-permitting. Students should be dressed for weather as appropriate for outdoor recess.

Medical Excuses from Recess. Whenever a child submits a note from a family member or physician requesting restrictions or limitations during a physical education class, similar procedures will be followed to restrict the child’s recess/play time to ensure consistency and well-being. Typically a student will be told to sit-out outside under supervision unless the medical excuse or school nurse determine the need to stay indoors. In that case, the student sits in the main office area.

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## **Publicity/Contact Permission Opt Out**

The school district provides the opportunity for families to opt out of having their “child’s name and image, original art works, and/or achievements published in the district/school’s website, school publication and/or news media.” This opt out includes all school district functions. Should families wish to opt out of having their have their child’s information and likeness published by the PTO, they must contact the PTO directly.

## **Personal Property**

The school cannot assume responsibility for lost or damaged items. Students should not bring valuable personal possessions, toys/trinkets, stuffed animals/dolls, games, electronic devices, etc. to school, as they may be lost or damaged and cause unnecessary distraction during the school day.

Students that have such items for an after school activity must keep them in their backpack during school hours. On occasion, children may be asked to bring an item for a special classroom activity. Your child’s teacher will inform you of those special events.

## **Placement of Students**

[Policy 5120](#) – Assignment of Students outlines parameters by which students are placed in programs and/or classes. Parents or guardians are invited to share with building administrators characteristics of their child in order to help facilitate the student’s placement in a classroom assignment. Any information should be shared with the building administrator prior to spring break. Requests for specific teachers or support staff cannot be honored.

## **PowerSchool**

PowerSchool is the student information system the district uses to collect student demographics and disseminate information about student progress. Families can access information about their student through the Parent Portal. At the beginning of each school year, families will receive notification that they need to log into the Parent Portal to review and confirm the student’s information.

Throughout the school year, parents or guardians will access the PowerSchool Parent Portal to obtain information about student progress including report cards and attendance information. See Reporting of Academics for additional information on Report Cards.

School staff are not able to reset passwords for PowerSchool. If a parent or guardian misplaces their Parent Portal password, they should follow the directions on the district’s PowerSchool link to reset the password.

Families without internet access should notify the office of their student’s school for assistance.

## Reporting of Academics

### Conferences

Families may arrange conferences with teachers, counselors, or the principal at any time by calling the school. Parent-teacher conferences take place in November. Conference schedules are available in the fall.

### Progress Reports

Information regarding student progress is vitally important to students, families, and staff. Every effort is made to communicate with families their child's progress in school. Communication may be in the form of in-person meetings, telephone conferences, email, or other means.

### Report Cards

Report cards are released three times per year, in winter, spring, and year-end. In the fall, a parent-teacher conference is scheduled to review pupil progress. Report card distribution dates are published on the district website.

## School Hours

	<b>Regular Session</b>	<b>Four-Hour Session</b>	<b>Early Closing - Emergency</b>	<b>Delayed Opening</b>
PreK and K Morning Session	8:35 - 11:15 a.m.	8:35 - 10:40 a.m.	8:35 - 11:15 a.m.	10:35 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
PreK and K Afternoon Session	12:15 - 2:55 p.m.	10:45 a.m. - 12:50 p.m.	Cancelled	1:15 - 2:55 p.m.
Grades 1-4	8:35 a.m. - 2:55 p.m.	8:35 a.m. - 12:50 p.m.	8:35 a.m. - 12:55 p.m.	10:35 a.m. - 2:55 p.m.
<b>Full-day preschool autism classes dismiss at 12:15 p.m. each Friday.</b>				

### Early Dismissal

Sometimes inclement weather or other emergencies necessitate the early closing of school. If an emergency early closing is necessary, a message will be sent to families and placed on the district website. Please be sure your contact information and permission for notifications is updated in School Messenger.

It is important that your child know exactly what he or she is to do if school is dismissed early. If there is an early closing, after school programs may be cancelled. Remind your child of the arrangements you have made in the event of an early closing.

### **Delayed Opening**

On occasion, weather or some other condition may necessitate the need for a delayed opening of schools. If a delayed opening is necessary, a message will be sent to families and placed on the district website. Please be sure your contact information and permission for notifications is updated in School Messenger.

### **Student Allergies and Classroom Celebrations**

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.

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 classroom teacher or school administration, birthday recognition may be one of the following:

- Students may be recognized on their birthday in the daily announcements and awarded a birthday ribbon.
- The class may celebrate by arranging with the teacher a 10-15 minute read-aloud by a family member or special guest.
- The birthday celebration may include the designated student choosing a game to play on the playground.

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

### **Student Records and Files**

[Policy](#) and [Regulation](#) 8330 – Student Records outlines information related to the types of student records the district must maintain as well as processes and procedures for access of files.

### **Student Services**

Information regarding Special Education rights, rules, and regulations can be requested from the Child Study Team at any time. All Child Study Team matters and special education processes and

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programs are governed by New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:14 and by Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District policies and procedures. These are legal matters, as such, they include safeguards and timelines that are prescribed by law. The Child Study Team and District Special Services Department take seriously their responsibility to provide involved parties with requisite information and appropriate service. Information regarding student services can be found on the [Special Services Web Page](#).

## **Transportation**

[Policy](#) and [Regulation](#) 8600 – Transportation outlines information related to the transportation of students to and from school. It also outlines information related to a change in drop off and pick up locations. Information regarding transportation can be found on the [Transportation Department Web Page](#).

## **Visitors**

**General Information.** Visitors are welcome in our schools to engage in purposeful approved activities and programs that have curricular relevance. It is expected that all visitors respect the school staff's responsibility to ensure that the educational program will not be disrupted. Parents or guardians wishing to volunteer at the school or participate in classroom activities should make arrangements with their child's teacher in advance. A classroom visit requires advanced consultation between the teacher and the visitor to establish a mutually beneficial time and ensure the purpose of the visit is in line with the instructional program.

For the safety and security of the students and staff, all visitors must report to the main office at the beginning and end of the school visit. All visitors will follow proper sign in procedures and wear identification throughout their time in the building or on the campus.

In the event your student forgets to bring their homework home at the end of the day and the parent or guardian would like to come back to the school to obtain it, please call the Main Office to ensure that the classroom teacher is still present. If the teacher is not present, simply leave a message on the teacher's voicemail or write a note of explanation. In the best interest of personal and school safety, our custodial staff will not open classrooms after school hours.

**Classroom Interruptions.** The academic program and instructional time is of utmost important and will therefore only be interrupted in the event of an emergency. If your student forgets to bring an item to school and the parent or guardian drops it off during the school day, please note that the student will not be asked to leave the classroom to receive the item. The item will be left in the main office. School staff will deliver the item to the classroom.

**Volunteers.** Volunteers are welcome in our schools. Any volunteer activities should be arranged with the classroom teacher prior to the event. Volunteers are expected to follow visitor sign-in procedures.