



**Hartwood Elementary  
Student/Parent  
Handbook 2024 - 2025**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

It is important that a positive relationship between home and school is established to ensure that our children have a successful school experience. As the principal of Hartwood Elementary School, I look forward to building this relationship with you and your child during the 2024-2025 school year.

Hartwood Elementary School's high expectations are an indicator of our commitment to student success academically and socially. Best practices and research-based instructional strategies will be utilized to provide differentiation to meet the needs of all learners. We understand that students enter elementary school at different readiness levels, and we will encourage and support them to meet their potential inside and outside of the classroom.

Hartwood Elementary School students and staff will continue to respect diversity and the cultural heritage of our students and community members. Our theme this year is **“Challenge Accepted.”** We will take pride in our collaboration as a school community and continue to grow.

Information in this handbook provides you with our school's policies, procedures, schedules, and protocols that will guarantee a successful school year at Hartwood Elementary School. Please review this handbook with your son/daughter.

I am looking forward to the wonderful events that will occur during the 2024-2025 school year. It is important that we recognize and celebrate the success of each student. We will continue to motivate students to make good choices and focus on academic success

Respectfully,

Rachel Fischbaugh, Ed.D.

## Vision

### **Mission**

*The Fox Chapel Area School District exists to maximize learning, achievement, and growth through a focus on educating the whole student.*

### **Vision**

*The Fox Chapel Area School District will engage students in a learning community that values diversity and focuses on the education of the whole student through pillars for success:*

**Purpose:** *Learning and teaching through inclusive, standards-aligned, and culturally responsive approaches that meet the needs of all students while monitoring growth and success through a data-informed approach for continuous improvement.*

**Passion:** *Providing students with authentic learning experiences that motivate them to pursue their interests with a focus on educating the whole students.*

**Care:** *Fostering safe and supportive learning environments that value the diversity, individuality, social and emotional wellness, and belonging of all students.*

**Community:** *Promoting the values and identity of the community through partnerships and collaboration.*

The Fox Chapel Area School District's core values of Respect, Responsibility, and Integrity will continue to be our focus in challenging our students' young minds to meet the challenges of tomorrow through **Respect, Responsibility, and Integrity.**

#### **Respect:**

*Valuing self and others  
Caring for one's environment  
Pride in positive actions*

#### **Responsibility:**

*Accountability  
Taking ownership in what you do  
Listening and following through*

#### **Integrity:**

*Do the right thing (even when no one is watching)  
Honest with self and others  
Trustworthy in thoughts, words, and actions.*

Strategic Vision

**Pillars to Success**

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Passion</b>	<b>Care</b>	<b>Community</b>
<p>Learning and teaching through inclusive standards-aligned and culturally responsive approaches that meet the needs of all students, while monitoring growth and success through a data-informed approach for continuous improvement.</p> <p>Our <b>Purpose</b> is our foundational building block, as it defines the most important element of our district - learning and teaching.</p> <p>Success within our <b>Purpose</b> is ensuring that students are met with challenging curriculums and instruction that allow them to grow and succeed as learners through the use of data-informed and differentiated pedagogical practices to meet individual learning needs.</p>	<p>Providing students with authentic learning experiences that motivate them to pursue their interests with a focus on educating the whole student.</p> <p>Our <b>Passion</b> pillar embodies the need to make learning exciting and relevant for students.</p> <p>Cultivating <b>Passion</b> ensures that all students have access to meaningful instruction and experiences to support their academic, behavioral, social, and emotional development and interests.</p>	<p>Fostering safe and supportive learning environments that value the diversity, individuality, social and emotional wellness, and belonging of all students.</p> <p>Our <b>Care</b> pillar centers around the belief that school is a safe and welcoming environment for all students.</p> <p><b>Care</b> is found in the relationships that are developed, fostered, and maintained throughout a student's school experience and by nurturing trust and mutual respect through resources that support student wellness.</p>	<p>Partnering and collaborating with the community.</p> <p>Our <b>Community</b> pillar represents the importance of stakeholder engagement within our schools and student involvement in our larger community.</p> <p><b>Community</b> involvement and stakeholder engagement is key to the shared responsibility of student success. Use of clear communication and input is a valued part of our students' success.</p>

## Accident Insurance

A limited student insurance policy is available at parental/guardian expense. This insurance coverage (which would help to pay doctor, hospital, and dental bills resulting from accidental injury) covers the hours and days when school is in session. This insurance also covers the child while he or she attends school-sponsored and supervised activities and trips during the school year, while on school premises, and during travel to and from school. A 24-hour insurance coverage is also available for purchase.

## After School Childcare

After school childcare is provided and operated by the YMCA. Registration forms are available at the school office. The operating hours for the YMCA are 3:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.

## Dismissal

2:50 All car riders are called to the Art Hallway as a group for dismissal. Students must have provided notes designating that they are being picked up in order to be included in this group. A checklist is held by staff with your child's name so that when you exit with your child, your name will be checked off. This method provides a safer and more efficient means of dismissal from the school. **The adult MUST provide identification.**

2:55 YMCA students are called to report to the cafeteria for after school care; van riders to their vans; 5<sup>th</sup> grade to their bus station.

2:56 Students are called to their respective bus stations according to grade level:

4, 3/2, 1/K. 3:05 After school activities are called to assemble in their designated spaces.

Bus numbers are called and students are loaded on the bus.

**Parking along the yellow line (the fire lane along the front of the building or the back of the building) is never permitted.** No one anticipates a school emergency; however, **cars parked on the yellow line create a hazard by preventing access for emergency vehicles in an urgent situation.** Please maintain the safety of our students, staff, and building, by parking in the front lot. **This procedure is to be followed AT ALL TIMES – during student arrival and dismissal, throughout the school day, and during after school and evening events.**

## Attendance

**If a student is absent more than three consecutive days, a doctor's excuse must be submitted.**

Regular attendance in school is extremely important and should be established early. Children achieve more, and feel better about themselves, when instruction is continuous and when a sense of belonging is established within the classroom. Those who learn the importance of regular attendance tend to stay more actively involved, and do better in school. However, we understand that children may become ill. **If your child is ill, please call the school office between 7:30 A.M. and 8:30 A.M. at 412-767-5396 to report your child's absence.**

Parents/guardians will be called to verify absences if the child is not reported off. In the event that your child is absent, you will receive an automated message from School Messenger.

**Pennsylvania public school attendance law requires that all absences be treated as unexcused/unlawful until the school district (school) receives a written excuse indicating the reason(s) for an absence.**

Parents/guardians must submit a written excuse within three calendar days of an absence and will be informed if they fail to provide a written excuse within three days of an absence. Please note that absences without excuses will be permanently recorded as unexcused/unlawful. Children under a doctor's care for a contagious disease or those with chronic absences, may be required to submit an excuse from a physician. Pennsylvania school law identifies excused/lawful absences as those related to:

- illness of the pupil
- death of an immediate family member
- medical/dental appointments
- bona fide religious holiday
- quarantine
- pre-approved educational travel
- weather so inclement as to endanger student's health or safety (impassable roads)
- court hearings related to student involvement with county children/youth or juvenile probation office agency
- authorized school activities (field trips)

The parents/guardians of chronically absent students may receive a call, letter, or visit from Hartwood personnel. Continued concern may result in required excuses from a physician, parental appearance before a magistrate and/or referral to Children Youth and Family Services. Please be advised that when there is a scheduled **half-day of school** on the calendar and a student is absent, he/she will be charged a **full day's absence**.

If a student is going on a family trip, parents/guardians must complete an ***Educational Tour and Trip Request Form*** so that the absence is recorded as legal and excused. The form may be obtained at the school office or downloaded under the category "District Forms" on Hartwood's Edline. Educational Tour and Trip Request forms are to be submitted **at least two weeks prior to the trip** in order to process the form and to provide teachers with ample time to compile student assignments. Students are required to make up work missed during educational trips. Parents/guardians are urged to restrict travel on school days since the lack of continuity disrupts instruction for the absent child as well as the class. **In addition, trip requests are strongly discouraged during CoGAT and PSSA testing weeks.** If an Educational Tour and Trip Request is submitted and extends a testing window with time not available for makeup, the request may be denied. **Refer to the district calendar and testing schedule at the end of the handbook.**

When students return to school after any absence, late arrival, or leave for an early dismissal they **must bring a written excuse signed by their parent/ guardian stating the date(s) of absence(s) and reason(s) for the absence(s)**. Absences without excuses (or excuses for reasons other than those approved by Pennsylvania School Law) are recorded as unexcused/unlawful.

### **Electronic Excuses/Educational Tours & Trips Form**

To streamline attendance processes across the Fox Chapel Area School District, parents/guardians are encouraged to sign in to their PowerSchool parent account to submit a full-day or half-day excuse, report a tardy arrival, or submit an early dismissal for their child. The district's Educational Tours & Trips form also now can be submitted electronically.

Submitting excuses through the PowerSchool parent portal is convenient and provides the opportunity for you to ensure that your child's attendance record is accurate and up-to-date. By providing a valid reason for your child's absence, we can keep track of their progress in school.

Forms can be submitted via a web browser or through the PowerSchool app.

- To submit an excuse via a web browser, please sign in to your PowerSchool account and click on “Forms” in the left-hand navigation menu. The “Student Attendance Form” will be visible under the “General Forms” tab.
- To submit an excuse via the PowerSchool app, please click on “More” at the bottom of the screen and then “Forms.” The “Student Attendance Form” will appear under the “General Forms” menu.

A how-to video for submitting electronic excuses will be available on the district’s YouTube page and at [www.fcasd.edu](http://www.fcasd.edu) under the “Technology” section.

Parents/guardians who do not have a PowerSchool parent account or do not want to utilize this method can still submit a written excuse and/or a written Educational Tours & Trips form.

### **Tardiness**

Morning procedures are important to a child’s success at school. Therefore, it is imperative that students arrive **before** the official start time. Buses arrive and students may begin entering the building at 7:50 A.M. Please note that announcements begin at 8:10 A.M. and **the instructional day begins promptly at 8:10 A.M.**

**Students arriving after the 8:10 A.M. start time are tardy.** We recognize that early appointments and family emergencies do arise. **However, students arriving after 8:10 A.M. start, regardless of the reason, are tardy and must bring a written excuse indicating the reason for tardiness and be signed in at the office by an adult before proceeding to their classrooms.** The reasons for excused tardies are the same as absences. All other tardies are marked as unexcused.

The parents/guardians of chronically tardy students may receive a call, letter, or visit from Hartwood personnel. Continued concern may result in required excuses from a physician, parental/guardian appearance before a magistrate, and/or referral to Children Youth and Family Services.

### **Homeless Students**

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, all school districts are responsible for identifying students experiencing homelessness and connecting them with the resources needed to ensure academic success.

Who is considered homeless? Children or youths living in a shelter, transitional housing, hotel/motel, vehicle, campground, on the street, or doubled up with friends or family due to a lack of alternate resources are considered homeless. An unaccompanied homeless youth is a child or youth that is not in the care of their parent or legal guardian and meets the definition of homeless under McKinney-Vento.

Where can students experiencing homelessness attend school? The law indicates that homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin (the school they attended at the time of the homeless episode or last school attended) through the end of the school year in which they find permanent housing, provided it is in the child’s/youth’s best interest.

If through consultation between the school and the family and/or unaccompanied youth it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in the student’s best interest, then the student has the right to immediately enroll in the school that non-homeless students living in the attendance area in which the child/youth is actually living are eligible to attend, even if they do not have all of the required documentation. Additionally, unaccompanied homeless youths have the right to immediately enroll in school, even if they do not have a legal guardian present.

What supports can school districts provide to homeless students? Homeless students are eligible for supports and services to remove barriers to educational success. These may include transportation to the school of origin, free meals, referrals to physical/mental health providers, clothing to meet school requirements, access to school supplies and resources, assistance with credit recovery, tutoring supports, expedited evaluations, and assistance to participate in school activities, including parent engagement opportunities, sports, clubs, etc.

Homeless Dispute Process: If at any time there is a disagreement about homeless status or best interest for school placement, the district will notify the family in writing of their determination that the family/unaccompanied youth is ineligible for McKinney-Vento services. At this time, the district will provide the family/unaccompanied youth with the ability to dispute their determination. Throughout the dispute process, the child/youth, including unaccompanied youth, will continue to be educated in the school of origin or immediately enrolled in the school in which they are seeking enrollment until the dispute process is finalized. Transportation will continue throughout the dispute process. All disputes will be sent to the ECYEH regional coordinator, who will issue a determination. If any party is unhappy with the determination, they can elevate the dispute to the state coordinator.

What if I think that I am eligible for services under McKinney-Vento? Please contact Susan Nichols, homeless liaison and foster care point of contact, Fox Chapel Area School District, at (412) 967-2431 or [susan\\_nichols@fcasd.edu](mailto:susan_nichols@fcasd.edu)

For more information, please see [A General Guide to Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness \(ECYEH\) Program](#).

### **Beechwood Farms**

In collaboration with Beechwood Farms, all Hartwood students have the opportunity to experience "nature walks." Fifth grade students have the opportunity to experience their "nature walks" during a four day and three night environmental camp experience. Cooperatively organized by Beechwood Farms and the FCASD, this fifth grade overnight environmental camp experience strives to foster a life-long understanding and appreciation of nature as it enables us to meet the PA academic standards for science.

### **Breakfast and Lunch**

Students will receive free breakfast and free lunch. Breakfast is served between 7:50 and 8:10 A.M. Snacks will be available for purchase. Parents/guardians may sign up for the online payment system at [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com) or may send cash or a check, made out to FCASD Cafeteria Fund, into school for the food service cashier.

A computerized Point of Sale (POS) system allows parents/guardians to pre-pay for snacks by depositing money into a debit account for purchases. All students have been assigned a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to be used for participation in the POS System. Student PIN numbers follow students to graduation. All students purchasing lunch, whether choosing to set up a pre-paid account or paying cash daily, use their PIN numbers as they purchase meals. As your child purchases a snack, he/she enters their PIN number and the payment will automatically be deducted from his/her account balance. The lunch aides at Hartwood assist children who forget their PIN numbers, or children who have not yet utilized the point of sale system.



## Building Usage

Hartwood Elementary is open after school hours for district activities, intramural programs, and for other uses per school board policy. Hartwood school and student activities take precedence, and other activities may be canceled if a school program is scheduled. Interested parties are required to complete a **Facilities Use Request Form, Facilities Request**, at least two weeks prior to their need. All requests must be approved at the building and district level. The party signing the request form is responsible to the district should any damage occur.

## Bus Transportation

Bus riding, to and from school, is a service (and privilege) provided by the school district to our families. Hartwood students must respect that privilege and demonstrate responsible behavior on the bus.

Most buses are at capacity. In fairness to all students, **no bus passes will be issued**. Students will be prohibited from boarding any school bus other than their own.

**The following consequences will result for children unable to demonstrate responsible behavior on the bus: The first time a student has a problem on the bus**, he/she will have a conference with the bus sponsor or principal. Parents/guardians may be contacted, depending on the situation. It is our hope that this will prevent any further inappropriate behavior.

**The second time a student has a problem on the bus**, he/she will have a second conference with the bus sponsor and the principal. A bus conduct report will be sent home and a phone call will be made to the parents/guardians. This may also result in a detention being assigned to the student.

**The third time there is a problem on the bus**, the student's parents/guardians will be contacted. Detention, suspension from the bus, or another appropriate consequence will be assigned to the student.

**Students who choose to fight, damage property, or create any unsafe condition on a bus will be dealt with individually.** Students may be assigned detention, suspended from the bus, or another appropriate consequence.

The bus drivers are responsible for the safety of students on the bus with help from 5<sup>th</sup> grade safety patrols. Bus concerns are directed to Mrs. Travaglia and Mrs. Papcunik. Questions regarding busing can be answered by the school office until 3:45 P.M. or directly by the transportation office (412-963-9600). Bus transportation is provided by ABC (412-828-9000).

## Classroom Assignments

It is with great care that classroom assignments are determined each spring, with input from the grade level teachers and other professional staff members who know and work with your child. This professional team takes thoughtful consideration in appropriately placing students in an effort to create heterogeneous classrooms that balance academic and social structures.

Among our considerations are gender and the learning support and enrichment needs of our students for services, which include, but are not limited to, Educational Support, Quest, and Speech. While your input is very important to us, parental/guardian requests for specific teachers limit our professional staff in making the best educational decisions for our students.

**Therefore, we respectfully request that parents/guardians refrain from making specific teacher requests.** Concerns about your child's individual learning needs may be addressed to the principal in writing by **May 19, 2024**.

Please note that, while important, parental/guardian input is one piece of the multi-faceted process of creating balanced classrooms, it is not the sole factor. Written input submitted by parents/guardians will be considered, however, not guaranteed.

## Classroom Celebrations & Volunteer

Classroom teachers and parent/guardian volunteers coordinate classroom celebrations for various activities throughout the year. Since the activities planned for these celebrations and lessons are specifically designed to address the age, interest and developmental level of the grade involved, **younger siblings attending these events distract from those activities and lessons. Therefore, we are unable to welcome younger siblings to attend classroom celebrations and volunteer opportunities.**

## Confidentiality

Respecting confidentiality is crucial to Hartwood Elementary School, as it acts to protect the rights of every student. Volunteers at school may notice a student involved in a disciplinary matter, or may observe student academic performance in the classroom. These circumstances should be treated confidentially and are not for discussion in, or outside, the school. It is extremely important that volunteers respect the privacy rights of all members of the Hartwood community. If volunteers or visitors have concerns about something seen or heard at Hartwood, they should speak privately to the appropriate teacher, or to the principal. In addition, VIPs (parent volunteers) are required to maintain confidentiality about the items (papers, tests) that they copy for teachers.

## Discipline Plan

In order to be consistent, every member of the staff uses the same set of rules. If a student's behavior choice does not follow the rules, is not responsible, or is not effective, the student will be asked to evaluate the choice and then plan how to make a more effective, responsible choice in the future. Afterward, the staff members involved help the student to be accountable for the plan that was made.

Respect themselves, others, and property.

Students and staff will interact with each other in a spirit of kindness, politeness, and cooperation. Students and staff will respect each other's personal space.

- Personal space includes people and their belongings.

Students and staff will respect school property.

- School property includes supplies the school provides.

Students and staff will not permit bullying behaviors in the school.

- Bullying includes repeated negative or malicious behavior that is aimed at another individual.

Use appropriate language at all times.

Students and staff will speak to each other in an appropriate manner.

Students and staff will speak in a polite, kind, and cooperative manner.

Students and staff will address each other with an appropriate tone of voice.

Students and staff will refrain from using inappropriate words and hand, body, or facial gestures.

Walk quietly throughout the building.

Students and staff will walk quietly in the building at all times.

Staff members will accompany their classes as they proceed through the building.

Students and staff will use an appropriate voice level in the school building.

Students will walk quietly to and from all classes.

**HARTWOOD ELEMENTARY BEHAVIOR CONSEQUENCE CHART**

BEHAVIORS	Step 1 3 verbal warnings	Step 2 Stop and Think Form (after 3 verbal warnings)	Step 3 Office Referral, Teacher Contacts Parents	Step 4 Office Referral, Administrator Contacts Parents (parent meeting)
Level 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>∇ Not following adult directive</li> <li>∇ Refusal to complete work</li> <li>∇ Disruptive behavior in classroom</li> </ul>	0	0	0	
Level 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>∇ Teasing (name calling)</li> <li>∇ inappropriate comment/gesture</li> <li>∇</li> </ul>		0	0	0
Level 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>∇ Harassment (racial/ethnic or sexual name calling)</li> <li>∇ Intentional Physical Aggression (hitting, pushing, slapping, kicking, tripping, throwing objects)</li> <li>∇ Violent threat toward others (verbal or gesture)</li> <li>∇ Inappropriate use of technology</li> <li>∇ Destruction of Property</li> </ul>			0	0
Level 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>∇ Violent purposeful action that could (or did) cause injury to others</li> <li>∇ Weapon in student possession</li> <li>∇ Stealing</li> </ul>				0

**Success**

Our stated goal is to develop successful students. Children who demonstrate quality work, show respect, and are responsible for all their choices, are successful. All children need to know that choosing to succeed enables them to grow.

A child's evaluation of his/her own work and behavior is a key to recognizing their success. Each student, Kindergarten – Grade Five, will be responsible for reflecting on his/her own performance as a Hartwood student.

**Self-evaluation will help children learn the benefits of making positive choices! Students who remember and follow this formula will be successful at school and at all the other things they do in their life.**

**Cafeteria Expectations**

Students should wash their hands before they come to the cafeteria.

Students are not to share food or money with other students.

Once seated, students must remain at the table.

Students are not to move to other tables unless asked to do so by a member of the staff.

Students are to make sure that the table and floor around them are cleaned before they are dismissed from the cafeteria.

No food is to leave the cafeteria unless it is in a student's lunchbox. No food is to be eaten outside the cafeteria unless it is done with the permission of a member of the staff.

Students should raise their hands if they need help and must ask one of the noontime monitor for permission to leave the table or the cafeteria.

Students will be able to buy "extras" when they are available, but not until they have eaten their lunch and given permission by the noontime monitor.

Voice levels should be conversational (low and quiet). We call this "6 inch" voice.

### **Playground Expectations**

Students are to follow all the directions given by the noontime aides.

Students are expected to wear outdoor clothing that fits the season. All children **will go** outside unless they have a doctor's excuse. Boots, gloves, and hats are necessary for inclement weather.

Students are to stay on the playground and away from classrooms and the wooded area that borders the playground. The space in front of the school is designated for sitting and "quiet" activity.

The portico at the main entrance should be free of activity at all times.

Students are to use the playground equipment provided by the school.

Personal possessions should be left at home. This includes all electronic devices. Personal items brought to school could be lost or broken.

Students should remember that recess is a time to have fun, but not when the activity may cause a person to be hurt. Because of this, games like tackle football and soccer are not permitted.

Students must have the permission of a noontime aide to leave the playground and come into the building. When returning to the playground, the student must let the noontime aide know that they have returned. All accidents must be reported immediately to the noontime aide so help can be provided.

Everyone should clean off mud, snow, grass, etc. when entering the building to keep Hartwood looking its best.

### **Bus Expectations**

Students need to remain seated at all times with their seatbelts fastened.

Nothing is to be passed through or held outside the windows.

Students may talk to their friends around them at a conversational volume.

No inappropriate or abusive language is permitted.

Students are responsible for any damage they cause to the bus or others' belongings.

Food, beverages, tobacco products, gum, and littering are not permitted on the bus.

The bus driver and school personnel have the authority to assign students to specific seats.

Students must ride their assigned bus. **There are no bus passes.**

### **The following consequences will result for children unable to follow these expectations:**

The first time a student has a problem on the bus, he/she will have a conference with the bus sponsor or principal. Parents/guardians may be contacted, depending on the situation. It is our hope that this will prevent any further inappropriate behavior.

The second time a student has a problem on the bus, he/she will have a second conference with the bus sponsor and the principal. A bus conduct report will be sent home and a phone call will be made to the parents/guardians. This may also result in a detention being assigned to the student.

The third time there is a problem on the bus, the student's parents/guardians will be contacted.

Detention, suspension from the bus, or another appropriate consequence will be assigned to the student. Students who choose to fight, damage property, or create any unsafe condition on a bus will be dealt with individually. Students may be assigned detention, suspended from the bus, or another appropriate consequence.

All of these expectations have been established so that Hartwood Elementary School is a safe and orderly school where everyone can grow and learn. The choices students make will result in either positive or negative consequences. These consequences are described in the next section of the handbook.

Anyone who has played a sport knows that a time-out is called when things are not going as planned or when the team or player needs to stop and come up with a new plan. The Time-Out program is designed to teach students to do the same thing. The goal is for each student to maintain self-control. The philosophy behind Time-Out is to give students an opportunity to remove themselves from a situation and “rethink” what they are doing.

### **Hartwood Bullying**

Hartwood is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for all students. Fox Chapel Area district policy states:

“Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting and/or outside a school setting that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:

- Substantial interference with a student’s education
- Creation of a threatening environment
- Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyber bullying.

School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.”

Hartwood recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation and distracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning. Therefore, **Hartwood Elementary School prohibits bullying by all students.**

### **Creating a Caring Community**

The guidance curriculum strives to develop a caring school community and avert bullying behaviors. The program introduces and reinforces the following topics through developmentally appropriate lessons from Kindergarten through Grade Five.

- Accepting Self and Others
- Understanding and Identifying Feelings
- Importance of Rules
- Identifying Bullying Behavior
- Ways to Handle a Bully
- The Power of the Bystander
- Qualities of a Friend
- Gossip & Rumor
- Point of View (Perspective)

Core components of the program are implemented at the school level, the classroom level, and the individual level. At the school level, the staff is trained to identify bullying behaviors, to assist victims, to empower bystanders, and to assist students identified as bullies to choose prosocial behaviors. The school counselor, behavioral specialist, principal, and school-based mental health professionals may assist in these efforts.

## Dress Code

Students at Hartwood Elementary School are expected to dress in a manner that is conducive to a safe, friendly, learning environment for students and teachers. Therefore, students have the responsibility of wearing clothing that projects a positive attitude of pride in self, school, and community. Students are required to wear appropriate, comfortable, and safe clothing that is neat, clean, and in good taste, and does not distract from the educational process.

Due to the air conditioning in the building, please remember to dress in layers – jackets/sweaters. Girls in grades 3-5 should not wear tops with thin straps and/or razor back tops.

Length of shorts and skirts for girls should be fingertip length when they have their arms to their sides. Boys in grades 3-5 should not wear muscle shirts.

In addition, students are strongly recommended to wear gym-appropriate shoes to climb on the playground equipment. Backless shoes and sandals (flip flops, clogs, mules, etc.) and heeled shoes and boots with leather soles prohibit safe footing on the climbing apparatus and have been the cause of slipping and sliding accidents.

Please properly mark your child's jacket, sweater, lunch box, etc., with your child's full name so that these items are easily identifiable. Lost and found areas are provided in the school for lost articles.

## Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE)

A district school police officer works with Hartwood students in the DARE Program. The primary emphasis of this program is to assist students in recognizing and resisting the pressures that influence them to experiment with drugs. The officer meets with students in Grade Five. The DARE curriculum builds student self-esteem, and teaches students how to say "no" to the social influences that promote the abuse of drugs and alcohol, as it presents positive alternatives.

## Early Dismissal

Please note that the instructional day at Hartwood ends at 2:50 P.M. and that educational activities continue until that time. Obviously, some appointments on school time cannot be avoided, and family emergencies do arise. **However, be advised that early dismissals are reserved for extenuating circumstances only.** Please arrange routine appointments and schedules to respect the integrity of Hartwood's instructional day. By complying, your child's educational day will not be curtailed, and the education of other students will not be disrupted.

**No child will be excused at any time other than the regular dismissal time without parent permission.**

If an unusual situation should arise that requires a student to leave the school at any time other than the normal dismissal time, the parent/guardian must send a note to the homeroom teacher. All students leaving early must be signed out at the office by the parent/guardian. If the student is to be picked up by someone other than the parent/guardian, the written request for the early dismissal must include the name and the relationship of the person who is picking up the child and the presentation of identification will be requested. For the safety of your child, students are not permitted to leave the building without written notification to the teacher, and approval from the principal. As with chronically tardy students, the parents/guardians of students with repeated early dismissals may receive a call, letter or visit from Hartwood personnel. Continued concern may result in a parental/guardian appearance before a magistrate and referral to CYF.

## PowerSchool

Congratulations! The Fox Chapel Area School District has signed up to use PowerSchool, an easy way for you to keep-up-to-date via the Internet. The district intends to use PowerSchool as a one-stop shop for information. Many reports and documents formerly on paper will be only available through PowerSchool. All teachers in the district will use PowerSchool starting with the first report period. Once you have activated your account, you can use PowerSchool to:

- Check your child's latest progress reports
- View calendar of events (also on Hartwood website)
- Email blasts will be delivered through Powerschool

## Educational Support

The special education team at Hartwood works in an inclusive fashion. The Educational Support staff offers support to students in classrooms as well as in the Resource Rooms. The Quest teachers plan and implement activities to assure that the needs of gifted students are met.

Learning Support Services may be accessed in several ways. After viewing test scores and classroom performance, a teacher or the principal may request that the services of the Response to Intervention Facilitator be employed to address academic or behavioral concerns. Parents may inquire as to assistance for their concerns through the classroom teacher, RtII facilitator, school counselor, or the principal.

Response to Intervention & Instruction (RtII) is a process that fosters systematic research-based instruction and interventions for all learners. Instruction and interventions are matched to student needs, and the monitoring of progress is continuous. Teachers regularly collect and analyze student assessment data to measure whole group and individual student progress related to grade level benchmarks and to plan and implement classroom and support interventions. At any time, parents may be invited to discuss their individual child's growth. This approach to monitoring student progress promotes student success.

Quest services are processed in a similar manner. After reviewing standardized tests, classroom performance, and grades, the classroom teacher and/or the principal may request further testing to determine if specialized instruction is necessary to meet the needs of the child. Parents/guardians may send a written request for evaluation to the school counselor, Quest teacher, or principal. A school psychologist will administer an individual battery of tests. Testing will not occur without receiving parent/guardian permission to test. Data from these assessments as well as several performance indicators, become part of a Gifted Written Report which is discussed at a team meeting. Multiple criteria for placement in the Quest program includes information from parent and teacher questionnaires, along with classroom, district, state and standardized assessments.

## Electronic Devices

We have noticed an increased presence of smartwatches and fitness trackers during the school day.

**These devices should not be used as a communication/gaming device or toy during the school day** (including on the bus). Should your child's watch, cell phone, or iPad be used inappropriately during the school day or become a disruption to learning, we will ask it be removed and stored in their backpack for the day. Please help us to reinforce this message with your children.

**Hartwood Staff is not responsible for damaged, lost or stolen technology.**

In the event that the classroom teacher would like to permit students to bring their own devices for a specific academic activity, the teacher will provide a separate permission letter that designates the time period and requires parent permission. The permission letter will limit the time frame for use and outlines the guidelines regarding student responsibility for use. The district is not responsible for loss, damage, or misuse of any electronic device brought to school by a student. Violations of the guidelines by a student will result in disciplinary action and may result in confiscation of the electronic device.

School devices are assigned to students by the classroom teacher for school related activities ONLY. Abuse of school technology will not be tolerated.

## Field Trips

The Fox Chapel Area School District and the Hartwood Parent Teacher Organization provide the funds for school field trips with field trips generally scheduled by teachers. These trips are arranged to enhance and supplement the elementary curriculum. Parents/guardians are required to sign a permission slip for field experiences. Children may not participate in out of school field experiences without this written permission. Occasionally, there is a nominal fee for a field trip. If the fee is a concern, please contact the principal or school counselor for confidential financial assistance. **Students that demonstrate unsafe behaviors to themselves or others, during the school year, may be prohibited from field trips.**

## Hartwood Parent Teacher Organization

Parents/guardians serve a variety of roles at Hartwood Elementary School. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is one way parents can be involved in the school. You are encouraged to become an active member in our PTO. Monthly meetings are held at the school, at which time the members are apprised of the various committee activities. At the meeting, any required voting is done, and occasionally, speakers are invited to attend these monthly sessions. Fundraising activities are held by the PTO throughout the school year. The proceeds from PTO fundraisers are used for general activities and for other special school programs (speakers, cultural diversity events, and class picnics or outings.) The PTO also coordinates many parent volunteer activities at Hartwood and sponsors several family oriented events through the year. All parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in PTO activities.

## Health Services

The certified school nurse is an integral part of the educational team, providing guidelines for school personnel so that specific health needs of students are met. The school nurse assesses the seriousness of illnesses or injuries that occur during the school day. She also provides, performs, administers, and/or supervises all necessary treatment procedures required by the student population. The school nurse will administer minor first aid to students with injuries or illnesses that occur at school. However, serious injury or illness may necessitate parental/guardian notification and possible outside medical attention. These decisions are at the discretion of the nurse, with consideration for the needs of the student.

Every year, you must update the Emergency Contact information in Powerschool. It should contain not only the business telephone numbers of parents/guardians, but also telephone numbers of two people who would be available during the day to assist with your child's illness or injury, should one occur. Please sign the reverse side of the Emergency Care Card and list any health problems that your child might have, including allergies. If, at any time during the school year, the information on the emergency card changes, please notify the school nurse immediately. The emergency card is of vital importance, giving school personnel access to information needed in the event of a student's illness or injury.



Medications should be given at home. Should the need arise for a student to be given medications during school hours, these procedures must be followed:

1. Written instruction signed by a physician with the diagnosis, medication, dosage, length of time to be given, possible side effects, and parent/guardian signature are required for all types of medication. Forms are available from the certified school nurse or her designee.
2. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to maintain an adequate supply of medication throughout the school year.
3. Medication must be brought to the school nurse by the parent/guardian in the prescription-labeled container, which must remain at school.
4. If the school nurse is not available, the building principal or designees will accept and sign for the medication.
5. Over-the-counter medications, including cough drops will not be administered, unless prescribed by a physician.
6. The certified school nurse will review all new medication requests.
7. The first dose of medication: When a child has been prescribed a new medication that must be taken in school, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to give the first dose when the child is at home to ascertain the child's reaction to the medication.
8. Medication will be discarded one week following the expiration date, or at the conclusion of the school year, unless the parent/guardian requests return of the medication. Medication will be returned to the parent/guardian or an adult designee only.

### **Exclusion from School and Return to School**

The Pennsylvania and Allegheny County Health Departments require exclusion of all students who are suspected of or have been diagnosed as having the following communicable diseases:

**Strep Throat and Scarlet Fever:** 24 hours after beginning appropriate treatment

**Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):** When judged not infective by a physician or school nurse

**Chicken Pox:** When all vesicles (sores) are crusted; approximately five days from eruption of last crop of vesicles

**Pediculosis (Head Lice):** After appropriate treatment has been instituted, **an adult must accompany** child(ren) to school to be examined by a school nurse. If the child is "nit free" he/she may return to school.

**Scabies:** After completion of appropriate treatment and judged not infective by a physician or school nurse.

**Ringworm:** After first treatment, if body lesions are covered. Neither scalp nor body lesions that are dried need to be covered.

**Impetigo:** 24 hours after beginning treatment

The school nurse should be consulted if there are any questions or concerns regarding readmission to school at 412-967-2481.

### **Sickness and Injuries**

Students should **not** be sent to school if they have:

- A fever of 100 degrees or more (students should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school) Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hour
- A suspicious rash
- A stomachache or fatigue, accompanied by a fever and/or vomiting
- A headache lasting one-two days, or recurring
- Red, irritated eyes with pus-like or excessive watery drainage
- Persistent, uncontrollable coughing and sneezing

When children become ill at school, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide transportation from school to home. Emergency care cards, completed by parents/guardians annually, enable the school nurse to ensure that children receive the best possible aid in the event of an emergency or illness at school.

**Students absent, after the third day, will be required to have a doctor's excuse when they return to school.**

### **Home Learning**

Home assignments are designed to:

- Provide essential practice in needed skills
- Establish good work habits
- Afford an opportunity for increasing self-direction
- Enrich and extend the in-school learning experience
- Help students learn to budget his/her time
- Bring students in contact with out of school educational resources

Parents/guardians can support this endeavor by providing a quiet, well lit area for their child to work. It is important for parents/guardians to encourage and support their child's/children's learning in and outside of school.

### **Instrumental Music**

Beginning in third and fourth grade, instrumental music lessons are given to individuals and small groups of students under the direction of the music department faculty. Elementary string students perform in a winter concert and in the annual String Orchestra Tour. Band students perform in the spring for Hartwood students and parents/guardians.

### **Morning Announcements**

Morning announcements will begin at 8:10 A.M. every morning. Under the direction of the School Counselor and Librarian, all Grade Five students have an opportunity to do the morning announcements using the public address system in the office. Student announcers will introduce themselves, give the date, information about cafeteria entrees, pertinent school information, and start the Pledge of Allegiance. All persons in the building during announcements are asked to wait quietly until completion. Since staff and visitors set a positive example for children, we request that there is no talking or movement through classrooms and hallways during the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Non-School Sponsored After-School Activities (i.e. Brownies, Scouts, Chess)**

The parent/guardian leaders of each after-school activity will create and distribute a permission slip **for all sessions** and will take regular attendance. **Parents/guardians are to sign and have their child return the permission slip to the classroom teacher. The permission slip must indicate a phone number and e-mail address where the parent/guardian can be reached between 3:00 P.M. and 4:00 P.M. on those days.**

If a parent/guardian decides not to send their child to a scheduled session, the parents/guardians **MUST** notify the classroom teacher and the activity leader. To ensure that no child goes home to an empty house, **children with no note and no parental/guardian call** will be sent to the activity or meeting. Following these procedures allows us to alert buses and have children brought back to the school in the event that a child inadvertently gets on a bus when he/she is scheduled to be at an after-school activity.

## Parent/Guardian or Community Volunteers

Hartwood Elementary School seeks to utilize parent/guardian and community human resources to enhance, expand, and support the educational process at Hartwood. We, at Hartwood, continually extend ourselves to reach the goal of success for all students as we recognize the importance of partnerships with parents/guardians, the community, and the broader context of the world. These connections help students to understand their role as citizens, and to recognize how the community cares for, and about, their education.

Regular volunteers should contact the school secretary to acquire the required health and clearance forms. Respecting confidentiality is crucial at Hartwood Elementary School, as it acts to protect the rights of every student. Volunteers at school may notice a student involved in a disciplinary matter, or may observe student academic performance in the classroom. **These circumstances should be treated confidentially and are not for discussion in, or outside, the school.** It is extremely important that volunteers respect the privacy rights of all members of the Hartwood community. If volunteers or visitors have concerns about something seen or heard at Hartwood, they should speak privately to the appropriate teacher, or to the principal. Information (papers, tests) copied for teachers by parent/guardian volunteers must remain confidential. The sign-in procedure outlined in the **Visitor** section of this handbook applies to volunteers, as well.

## Parent/Guardian Teacher Conferences

Parent/Guardian Teacher Conferences are held during the month of November. However, parents/guardians are welcome to arrange additional conferences, as necessary, throughout the year. These additional conferences can be scheduled by contacting the child's classroom teacher through the school office or through the teacher's individual voice or e-mail.

During the November Parent/Guardian Teacher Conference weeks, students are dismissed early to provide time in the afternoon for parents and teachers to meet. Conferences are generally scheduled before school, in the afternoons and evenings after early dismissals.

## Parking

**Parking along the yellow line (the fire lane along the front of the building and the back of the building) is never permitted.** No one anticipates a school emergency; however, **cars parked on the yellow line create a hazard by preventing access for emergency vehicles in an urgent situation.** Please maintain the safety of our students, staff, and building by parking in the front and side lots. **This procedure is to be followed at ALL TIMES – during student arrival and dismissal, throughout the school day, and during after school and evening events.**

## Positive Behavioral Support

Hartwood Elementary has behavioral support services via a Behavior Specialist. Positive behavior support is an effective and proactive process for improving social competence and academic achievement for all students.

The Behavior Specialist provides direct service to students with challenging behaviors, consultative services, assessment and supported instructional programs for students in special education. The Behavior Specialist also provides training and works collaboratively with teachers, aides, and support staff to demonstrate best practices, strategies and techniques to enhance instruction for students with social communications, behavioral and learning challenges, and assistance to parents in accessing services outside of the school.

### **Raptor**

In an effort to enhance the safety and security of our students and staff, the Fox Chapel Area School District uses the Raptor Visitor Management System in each of our schools. The system tracks all visitors, contractors, and volunteers who come into the schools, and provides alerts on anyone who may jeopardize the safety of our students and staff.

All visitors must be buzzed in at each school and immediately report to the office. Visitors then must present a valid state-issued driver's license or ID, which is entered into the Raptor system. A badge is then issued identifying the name of the visitor, as well as the date and time of their visit. Visitors return the badge prior to exiting the building, and will then be signed out of the system.

The safety of our students and staff is our highest priority, and the Raptor Visitor Management System is just one of the tools we use to make our schools safer.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the district's School Safety and Security Coordinator, Joseph Kozarian, at 412/967-2448, or email him at [joseph\\_kozarian@fcsd.edu](mailto:joseph_kozarian@fcsd.edu). For more information on the Raptor Visitor Management System, please visit the Raptor Technologies website at [www.raptortech.com](http://www.raptortech.com).

### **Recess**

Since outdoor activity and fresh air are integral to student growth and well-being at school, students will go outdoors for recess except during very serious weather conditions. **Therefore, students should be properly dressed and prepared for outdoor recess each day by wearing (or bringing) coats, hats, scarves, gloves or mittens, and rubber-soled shoes or boots.** It is advised, particularly during winter months, that students keep a change of clothing and shoes in their lockers. Students are required to wear gym-appropriate shoes to climb on playground equipment. Backless shoes and sandals (flip flops, clogs, mules, etc.) and heeled shoes and boots with leather soles prohibit safe footing on the climbing apparatus and have been the cause of slipping and sliding accidents. **Students will be outside for recess unless they have a doctor's excuse.**

### **Recording by Video-tape, Audio-tape, Photography, Electronic Media**

Students, school events, and educational programs are often made the subject of videotape, audiotape, photography, electronic media and the like for use in improving instructional practices and for legitimate public and media purposes. Throughout the school year, your child may be recorded, interviewed, and/or photographed by representatives from newspapers, television, or radio stations, as well as, district personnel, or their designees, and these items may be publicly displayed in print and/or electronically in places such as the district and school World Wide Web sites. Parents/guardians may object to this practice by submitting a written objection to the building principal or to the Coordinator of Communication, Fox Chapel Area School District, 611 Field Club Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15238. Questions regarding this practice may be directed to the principal or by calling the Communications Office at 412-967-2452.

## Report Cards

Class information, attendance, and other class activities can be accessed online using PowerSchool. More information on using PowerSchool can be found on the PowerSchool website.

During the 2020-2022 school year, report card information will only be accessible online using PowerSchool. Parents will be able to view student grades/ratings at specified time periods following the quarters. If needed, parents may contact the school secretary to have a paper copy of the report card mailed home following each quarter.

Students in grades one through five will have report card information available following each quarter. For students in Kindergarten, report card information will be available following the second, third, and fourth quarters. For descriptions of standards-based grading and the ratings used by the FCASD, visit <http://web.fcasd.edu/reportcard>.

## Safety Drills

A variety of safety drills are practiced periodically to ensure student knowledge and comfort with hearing the sounds and participating in the drills.

**FIRE DRILLS** are held monthly to practice evacuating the building and moving to a safe distance in a timely and safe manner. Hartwood students and staff exit the building through designated doors and assemble in designated areas to practice being a safe distance from the school.

**BUS DRILLS** are held twice a year to practice the emergency exiting of buses. Bus drills are generally held in the morning upon student arrival at school, wherein students exit the buses that morning through either the side or rear emergency doors. The bus driver, safety patrol sponsor, and staff assist students with this drill.

**SHELTER IN PLACE DRILLS** will be initiated and practiced several times this year, so that all students and staff know where to go and what safety precautions to take in the event of a crisis situation or an intruder either inside or outside of the building. A lockdown drill involves the students staying within the classrooms with their teacher. Students will move away from the direct line of the classroom windows or interior door windows. The teachers will inform students that they are to stay in their classrooms to stay secure until the principal notifies them that the area is clear.

**SEVERE WEATHER DRILL** is mandated by the state each year in early spring. Students and staff practice going to a safe location in the building and getting into a safe physical position.

## School Closings, Delays, Emergency Evacuations/Dismissals

Please note the following **school closing**, **school delay** and **emergency early dismissal** information.

**SCHOOL CLOSINGS** – The Fox Chapel Area School District will cancel school if the health, safety or well-being of our students is threatened due to **severe weather or unforeseen circumstances**.

**DELAYED SCHOOL OPENINGS** – The Fox Chapel Area School District may issue a “2 hour delay” when serious morning weather conditions (**which are expected to moderate later in the day**) occur. When a “2 hour delay” is called, school buses will run two hours later than usual, and classes will begin two hours later than usual. Please note that breakfast **will not** be served on **two** hour delay days. However, lunch **will be** served as usual and dismissal will follow its regular schedule, as will the YMCA after-school care program.

**EMERGENCY EARLY DISMISSAL** – **In the event that an emergency early dismissal is called due to poor weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances during the school day, we need to know where to send your child(ren)**. This information must be documented in Powerschool.

Since young children may feel insecure about changes in dismissal, we encourage you to plan, and periodically discuss, alternate dismissal arrangements with your child(ren). When planning, please note that elementary students may arrive home before middle school and high school students.

Our goal is to ensure that all of our children have a parent/guardian waiting for them at home, or are comfortable with their alternate dismissal arrangement in the event of an emergency early dismissal.

The school district website ([www.fcasd.edu](http://www.fcasd.edu)) and school website ([www.fcasd.edu/schools/Hartwood](http://www.fcasd.edu/schools/Hartwood)) will alert families of early dismissal information as will the following radio and TV stations:

**Radio Stations Television Stations**

KDKA (1020 AM) KDKA-TV WTAE-TV

KQV (1410 AM) WPXI-TV

### **School Counselor**

A comprehensive guidance program is proactive in nature and addresses the developmental needs of all students, as well as offering additional support to individual students when appropriate. The school counselor aids in the development of students' social, emotional, and academic success. The counselor works collaboratively with parents/guardians and staff to address a variety of educational, social, emotional, and behavior concerns and facilitates communication/consultation with outside agencies. Test interpretation and the coordination of assessments are additional responsibilities of the school counselor. Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the school counselor with any questions and concerns at 412-967-2483.

### **Site-Based Team (SBT)**

The SBT is composed of two representative parents/guardians, a community member, faculty members, a staff member, and the principal, who provide input and guidance to our school community. Standing committees research and recommend ideas and solutions to the SBT. Meeting once a month, the SBT focuses on the district and building strategic plans and works with the principal to make and implement ideas and decisions for students and staff.

### **Student Network/Internet User Agreement and Parent/Guardian Permission Form**

To use networked resources, all students must sign and return a parent/guardian permission form, and those under age 18 must obtain parental/guardian permission. The form is distributed to parents/guardians upon initial entrance into the Hartwood Elementary School.

**The activities listed below are not permitted:**

- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Giving personal information, such as complete name, phone number, address or identifiable photo, without permission from teacher and parent/guardian
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others
- Damaging or modifying computers, computer systems or computer networks

- Violating copyright laws
- Using others' passwords
- Trespassing in others' electronic folders, work or files
- Employing the network for commercial purposes, financial gain, or fraud
- Installation of non-approved software
- Chat/Instant Message/Blog/Wiki Programs that are not part of classroom instruction
- Modifying Software Settings
- Loading or use of unauthorized games, programs, files, or other electronic media.

**Violations may result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action.**

### **Student Observation by Parents/Guardians/Outside Agencies**

While we understand that parents/guardians may have an interest in having their child observed by an outside agency, we must be cautious that the teaching/learning process is not interrupted. It is also important that the privacy of each student is protected. Parents/guardians may request a student observation with personnel by following set guidelines, beginning with the completion of the Outside Agency Student Observation Form. Forms can be obtained from the building principal. The building principal will make the final determination concerning this type of request.

### **Use of School Grounds**

Safe and proper use of the playground and parking areas at Hartwood Elementary School by community members is expected. In the best interest of all, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

Children should be supervised by adults at all times.

Bike riding, roller blading, skating, or skateboarding must only be done on the asphalt/blacktop areas, not on the sidewalks or curbs.

Hoverboards are not permitted on school property (possession and/or use)

Glass containers of any kind are not permitted.

Use of alcohol and tobacco are forbidden on school property.

School grounds will be considered closed at dusk except on occasions of school-sanctioned events. Any illegal, dangerous, or destructive activity will not be tolerated and is subject to prosecution by the police. Weekend parking on school grounds must receive prior approval from the principal.

### **Visitors**

As part of the Safe Schools Project, all parents/guardians, visitors, and volunteers must sign in and out of the building at the front desk indicating the reason for the visit. Each approved visitor will then be given a visitor's badge by the secretary. This visitor badge must be worn at all times while in the building. We thank everyone in our community, in advance, for helping to make Hartwood a safe place for our children.

### **Volunteers**

Dear Prospective School Volunteer:

Thank you for your interest in volunteering in Fox Chapel Area Schools. We believe volunteers can make valuable contributions to the educational program. The FCASD School Board and Superintendent endorse the use of volunteers within the legal requirements and administrative regulations.

For the safety of our students, we encourage all volunteers to obtain three clearances:

1. Request for Criminal Record Check
2. Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance
3. FBI Criminal History Record (register under the Department of Education)

Volunteers fall into one of three categories: Independent Volunteers, Volunteer Sponsors, and Assistive Volunteers (Guests). Independent volunteers and volunteer sponsors MUST provide copies of the three clearances listed above prior to volunteering

in the school. Copies of the Request for Criminal Record Check, Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance, and FBI Criminal History Record (through the PA Dept. of Education) must be on file at the school office prior to volunteering. Independent volunteers and volunteer sponsors include:

- Classroom Party Coordinator
- Volunteers are not always under the direct supervision of a principal or professional staff member. ▪ School/district or PTO/PTA sponsored activities not under the direct supervision of the principal or professional staff member.
- Field Trips
- Homeroom Parent Helpers
- Field Day and end-of-the-year events
- Fall Festival
- Other activities as determined by the building principal

Assistive volunteers are encouraged to obtain their clearances and provide copies to the school principal. However, at this time, these volunteers are not required to provide copies of clearances. Assistive Volunteers (Guests) are defined as someone who is invited to or is working in the school under the direction of the principal or a professional staff member. These volunteers include:

- Guest speakers
- Assembly performers
- Birthday readers
- Evening musical or social events where children are accompanied by their parents.

Thank you for your willingness to volunteer in the Fox Chapel Area School District! Your services are invaluable and much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rachel Fischbaugh, Hartwood Elementary Principal

## **Weapons**

Local, state and federal laws prohibit any type of weapons on school property.



**WHEN CAN YOUR CHILD BE EXPELLED FOR BRINGING WEAPONS TO SCHOOL? (ACT 26)** Act 26 is a Pennsylvania law which requires the expulsion for at least one year of any student who possesses a weapon on school property, at a school function, or going to and from school. Many students have faced expulsion as a result of this law. Here's what you need to know.

**Who is affected by Act 26?**

Any student who possesses a weapon in school, or at a school activity, or going to and from school (including on public transit), must be expelled for at least one year under the law. The student does not have to use the weapon; it is enough to carry it, keep it in a locker or book bag, or hold it for a friend.

**What is a weapon?**

A weapon is defined by Pennsylvania school law as "any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, and [anything else] capable of inflicting serious bodily injury." This definition may include box cutters, kitchen knives, pen knives on keychains, and other common household items. A narrower definition is used for special education cases (see next page).

**Does a student have any rights in an expulsion case?**

Before a student can be expelled, the student is entitled to a formal hearing. The student is entitled to advance notice of the hearing, and can request that the names of the witnesses against the student and copies of any statements made by those witnesses be provided to the student before the hearing. At the hearing, the student has the right to bring an attorney, may question the witnesses against him/her, and may present evidence on the student's behalf. Although the hearing may be held before a hearing officer or a panel of the Board of School Directors, the entire school board must vote on the expulsion. If a student wishes to challenge an expulsion decision, an appeal must be filed in court within 30 days of the decision.

**Will the police be notified?**

Act 26 requires school officials to notify the police whenever they discover any weapon covered by the Act. A separate law makes the possession of any such weapon on school grounds or on a bus traveling to or from school a crime.

**Are there any exceptions to the rule that a student must be expelled for at least one year under Act 26?**

The superintendent may recommend modifications of such expulsion requirements for a student on a case-by-case basis. A school district may not adopt a "zero tolerance policy" that does not allow the superintendent to consider the individual circumstances of a student and recommend to the school board that it impose less discipline than expulsion for one year.

**Are students in special education affected by Act 26?**

Federal law requires that special procedures must be used before students in special education may be disciplined, even after the passage of Act 26, and they cannot be disciplined for conduct related to their disability. However, a student in special education who brings a dangerous weapon to school may be transferred to an alternative program for 45 days without parental consent while those special procedures are used.

**What happens to a student who has been expelled?**

When a student is expelled, if the student is under 17 and cannot find another school to attend within 30 days of the expulsion, the student's family must notify the school district in writing of the need for a program. It is then the school district's duty to provide the student with an educational program, although the law is not clear about what that program must look like.

A student in special education has the right to continue receiving special education services up until graduation or age 21, even if expelled. Those services would just have to be delivered outside the regular school setting.

**Does a student's family have to tell a new school district about an expulsion or disciplinary problems at another school?**

Yes. Act 26 also requires that whenever a student registers in a new school district, the student's "parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of a student" must give the new school a sworn statement saying whether the student has ever been suspended or expelled from any public or private school in any state for offenses involving weapons, drugs, alcohol, willful injury to another person, or violence on school grounds. This statement then becomes part of the student's record. Persons giving incorrect information on purpose can be charged with a third-degree misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of \$2500 or one year in jail.

Once the sworn statement is provided, the student must be admitted and provided with an education on the same terms as other students in that district. The only exception to this requirement is that a student expelled from one district for an Act 26 weapons offense may be excluded from the new district and placed in an alternative assignment for the duration of the expulsion by the old district.

**Funding for this brochure was provided, in part, by Pennsylvania Protection & Advocacy, Inc., pursuant to the Developmentally Disabled Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, P.L. 101-496, and the P&A for Mentally Ill Individuals Act, P.L. 99-319.**

*Prepared by: Education Law Center (Rev. 12/02)*

*(215) 238-6970 (Philadelphia)*

*(412) 391-5225 (Pittsburgh)*

[www.elc-pa.org](http://www.elc-pa.org)

## **Weather Emergencies**

Emergencies affecting any or all of the Fox Chapel Area Schools will be made known over local radio and television stations. Please listen to the following radio and television stations for information regarding delays, cancellations, or early dismissals: **Radio Stations Television Stations**

KDKA (1020 AM) KDKA-TV

KQV (1410 AM) WPXI-TV

WTAE-TV

When there is a school delay, cancellation, or early dismissal, every parent/guardian in the district will receive a phone call from the district's school messaging system. Additionally, an announcement will be placed on the district's website at [www.fcasd.edu](http://www.fcasd.edu). Please note that during a power outage it may not be possible to place an announcement on the district's website. Delay, cancellation, and/or early dismissal announcements will also be placed on the following television stations: KDKA – TV, WPXI – TV, and WTAE -TV.

In the event of a severe storm forecast or other emergency, when children are already at school, an emergency early dismissal may occur. Parents/guardians who work or are not at home should plan with their child (children) where to go should such a situation arise. We will request this information from parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year on the **Student Pick-Up Authorization Form**. This form also designates persons to pick up your child (children) for all instances when the student is released from the school. Please ensure that only those persons on the form attempt to pick up your child (children). Anyone picking up a student will be required to produce photo identification and sign a release form.

## **Wellness Policy**

**Birthday and Party Treats Are No Longer Permitted**

The Fox Chapel Area School District is committed to the optimal development of every student. The district believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic developmental and social success, we need to create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level throughout the school year. In its continuing efforts, the district has adopted recommendations from The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). These recommendations include; Nutrition Standards for School Nutrition Programs, nutrition standards for "other foods" sold or served during the school day. This requires that all "other foods" reflect the smart snack guidelines.

### **Food Allergies – Peanut/tree nut allergy alert**

There are children in our school who have serious allergies, particularly tree nut/peanut allergies. Tree nuts include but are not limited to almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, chestnuts, filbert/hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts (pignolia nuts), pistachios, and walnuts. A child with a serious tree nut/peanut allergy can suffer a reaction merely by touching a food containing a tree nut or peanut. Therefore, the following guidelines are in effect.

A letter will be sent home to parents if a child in the classroom has tree nut/peanut allergies.

Teachers will refrain from using peanut butter or peanut or tree nutshells in classroom projects. Parents are asked not to send in student projects that contain peanuts, tree nuts and/or their shells.

To prevent cross-contamination, it is necessary to carefully wash all utensils and surfaces before and after each food preparation.

### **Do not include candy or other food treats as part of holiday cards.**

Students who eat peanut butter or tree nuts or peanut products are to wash their hands with soap and water after eating lunch. All students should wash his/her hands with soap and water before leaving for school.

Understanding the complexity of food allergies in young children is a learning and growing process for all of us; we trust that you understand how deeply important it is for all of us to respect and adhere to these guidelines. Please contact the school nurse, school counselor, classroom teacher or principal should you have any questions or concerns about food allergies in children or food allergy related issues.

Smart snack guidelines are in effect from the time the first student arrives until 30 minutes after all students are dismissed. All foods made available include vending (if applicable), a la carte, are considered under the smart snack guidelines.

1. Parents/guardians/food providers should take every measure that student access to foods and beverages will meet federal, state/local laws and guidelines.
2. Nutrition information for products offered a la carte is available near the point of purchase (register).
3. The School District will be providing information to families via the school food service website that will encourage parents/guardians to teach their children about health and nutrition.
4. Students will be encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast.

### **Withdrawing a Student**

When a child is transferring from the Fox Chapel Area School District, the parent/ guardian should notify the Hartwood office of the new residence, the name of the new school district, the date of transfer, and should

complete an official withdrawal form. For records to be transferred to the new school, a release form must also be signed. A one-week notice is requested for completion of the related clerical work.

### **Younger Siblings at School**

Classroom teachers and parent/guardian volunteers coordinate classroom activities during the course of the school year. Since the activities and lessons planned are specifically designed to address the age, interest, and developmental level of the grade involved, younger siblings attending these events distract from those activities and lessons. Therefore, we are unable to welcome younger siblings to attend classroom activities and lessons.

### **Closing Thoughts**

This booklet has been published so that all members of the Hartwood learning community – families, students, and staff – understand what the expectations and consequences are for the children. It takes each of us working together and supporting every child in our learning community to provide a climate and atmosphere for success.

PSSA TESTING WINDOW

2024-2025

# PSSA Testing Window 2024-2025

Assessment	Dates	Grades
English Language Arts	April 21 - 25, 2025	Grades 3-8
Mathematics, Science and Make-ups	April 28 - May 2, 2025	Grades 3-8
Early Reporting Deadline	May 2, 2025	Grades 3-8
PSSA Math, Science, Makeups (Optional)	May 5 - 9, 2025 (No early reporting)	Grades 3-8

## FOX CHAPEL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

### TESTING PROGRAMS

**Do not arrange educational trips or vacations during scheduled assessments above.**

<b>Diagnostic Tests Grades</b>
<b>AIMSweb K-12</b>
<b>Classroom Diagnostic Tools K-12</b>
<b>Group Mathematics Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GMADE) K-12</b>
<b>Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test (Eligibility for Algebra) 5-8</b>
<b>Benchmark Reading Assessment K-5</b>

<b>Renaissance Learning STAR 360 K-12</b>
<b>Reading Recovery Diagnostic Survey 1</b>
<b>Slosson Oral Reading 1-6</b>
<b>Woodcock Reading and Mastery Test 1-6</b>

Compliance Statement

The Fox Chapel Area School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, and/or any other basis prohibited by law, and prohibits discrimination, including harassment, in any employment practice, education program, or activity that it operates. Individuals may report concerns or questions to the Title IX coordinator and/or the Section 504 and Americans with Disabilities (ADA) coordinator. The notice of nondiscrimination is available at [www.fcasd.edu](http://www.fcasd.edu).

Title IX: David P. McCommons, Ed.D. (412/967-2456)  
Deputy Superintendent  
[David\\_McCommons@fcasd.edu](mailto:David_McCommons@fcasd.edu)

Section 504 and ADA: Timothy A. Mahoney, Ed.D. (412/967-2435)  
Director of Special Education and Pupil Services  
[Timothy\\_Mahoney@fcasd.edu](mailto:Timothy_Mahoney@fcasd.edu)

Address: Fox Chapel Area School District  
611 Field Club Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

#### **Nondiscrimination in School and Classroom Practices**

**The district strives to maintain a safe, positive learning environment for all students that is free from discrimination. Discrimination is inconsistent with the educational and programmatic goals of the district and is prohibited on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities and on any conveyance providing transportation to or from a school entity or school-sponsored activity.**

#### **Tobacco/Nicotine – 222/323**

**The Board recognizes that tobacco, nicotine and nicotine delivery products present a health and safety hazard that can have serious consequences for both users and nonusers and the safety and environment of the schools. Hazing - 247**

**The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe, positive environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the district and are prohibited at all times.**

#### **Public Attendance at School Events – 904**

**The Board welcomes the public at activities and events sponsored by the district, but the Board also acknowledges its duty to maintain order and preserve school facilities during such events (tobacco/nicotine, free admittance, service animals).**

**The policies in their entirety can be viewed on the Fox Chapel Area School District Website**

#### **CHAPTER 14 SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS**

The Fox Chapel Area School District provides a free, appropriate, public education to eligible students. To qualify as an eligible student, the child must be of school age, in need of specially-designed instruction, and meet eligibility criteria for one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities, as set forth in Pennsylvania State Regulations:

- Autism
- Deafness
- Visual Impairment including Blindness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury

The District engages in identification procedures to ensure that eligible students receive an appropriate educational program consisting of special education and related services, individualized to meet student needs. At no cost to the parents, these services are provided in compliance with state and federal laws and are reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational benefit and student progress.

To identify students who may be eligible for special education, various screening activities are conducted on an on-going basis. These screening activities include: review of group-based data (cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, report cards, ability, and achievement test scores); hearing, vision, physical, and speech/language screening; and review by a Child Study Team, MTSS Team, or (Elementary) Student Assistant Program ((E)SAP) Team. When screening results suggest that the student may be eligible for special education services, the District seeks parental consent to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation.

Parents who suspect that their child is eligible for special education services may request a multidisciplinary evaluation at any time through a written request to the Director of Special Education and Pupil Services.

Services designed to meet the needs of eligible students include the annual development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP), bi-annual or tri-annual multidisciplinary re-evaluation, and a full continuum of services, which include Itinerant, Supplemental, or Full-Time Levels of Support. The extent of special education services and the location for the delivery of such services are determined by the IEP team and are based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age, and the level of intensity of the specified intervention. The District also provides related services required for the student to benefit from the special education program.

Parents may obtain additional information regarding special education services and programs and parental due process rights by contacting the Director of Special Education and Pupil Services, 412-967-2435, Fox Chapel Area School District, 611 Field Club Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15238.