



2024-2025

Parent/Student Handbook

Bennett Elementary School

4166 State Route 28
Boiceville, NY 12412
657-2354
www.onteorak12.ny.us

*The Bennett School opens the door of opportunity.
All are welcome to enter.*

-K.Carle

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WELCOME TO THE BENNETT SCHOOL!

We are committed to providing your child with a high-quality education comprised of varied learning opportunities that include hands-on learning experiences.

Our mission is to create an engaging, healthy, and safe learning environment that empowers all students to pursue their dreams and achieve their goals. Bennett students contribute thoughtfully to the global community and have empathy for all.

Students will graduate with the independence, confidence, self-awareness, empathy, and problem-solving skills to reach their maximum potential and to be successful.

Review this handbook in its entirety with your child.

You are a valued member of our school community. We believe that a child's education is a partnership between the home, school, and larger community.

We value and welcome your participation.

Gabriel Buono
Principal



BENNETT SCHOOL STAFF

Principal
Gabriel Buono

Office Staff: Deborah Hapeman and Gina Tucker

Kindergarten: Shandell Heppner
Melissa Johnson

First Grade: Alissa Hackett
Rachel Wood

Second Grade: Sharon McInerney
Allison Mitchell

Third Grade: Robert Hallock
Laura Kirn

Fourth Grade: Elizabeth Corsitto
Adam LaFera

Fifth Grade: Doreen Erlwein
Joan Mayone-Allison
Kristen Warren

Special Education: Elizabeth George
Abbie Gordon
Jolie Moorhus

Consultant Teachers: William Michella
Samantha Mundy
Katrina Quigley

School Nurse: Brianna Ashmore

Art: Roberta Ziemba

Music: Corinne Sorace
Karen McKenna
Josephine Catalano

Library Media Specialist: Bernadette Amodeo

Occupational Therapist: Nina Reiten
Nicole Zacchio

Physical Therapist: Erin Burch

Physical Education: Christopher Kasprzyk
Matt Ryan

AIS Math: Sharee Haro Montelongo

AIS Reading: Kristina Countryman
Amy Gustafson
Brigid Kelly
Amanda Kovac

Speech: Alexandra Harkin
Megan Wiacek

Social Worker: Kevin White

Psychologist: Lauren Petriski

Guidance Counselor: Candice Sosler

ENL: Richard Mugge

Teaching Assistants

Adam Blank	Catherine Johnan
Karen Cole	Veronica Kivlehan
Danielle Craft	Shaylin McGowan
Joe Forte	Stephanie Pearlman
Nicole Hastie	Lauren Silver
Dylan Hill	Molly Slater

Monitors

Leana Nieves
Donna Turner

2 Hour Monitors

Jonathan Verdon

Cafeteria Staff: Sally Piland
Odessa Harrison

Custodial Staff: Brian Davis
Lisa Baughman
Pam Natoli

DAILY SCHEDULE

The Onteora School District provides each student with a district calendar noting planned conference days, school holidays, and scheduled events. Please refer to this calendar to determine when school will be in session.

The daily schedule for Bennett Elementary School is as follows:

8:40 a.m. Busses unload, classrooms open, Breakfast Program begins

9:00 a.m. Classes begin, attendance is taken, daily announcements

Students arriving at 9:00 a.m. or after are considered tardy

11:00 p.m. 12:05 p.m. Grade K-1 Recess/Lunch

11:30 p.m. 12:35 p.m. Grade 2-3 Recess/Lunch

12:05 p.m. 1:10 p.m. Grade 4-5 Recess/Lunch

3:25 p.m. Students (pick up) dismissed to Exit 2

3:30 p.m. 3:40 p.m. Students dismissed to busses/Busses depart

SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYS

Notification of school closings and delays will be made through our ***Shout Point Messenger*** program.

For your convenience, the Onteora School District also posts all delayed openings and closings at www.schoolclosingnetwork.com and on the district website at www.onteora.k12.ny.us.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Up-to-date information is critical in the event of an emergency. Onteora Central School District requires proof of residency whenever a change of address occurs. Please notify the main office of address changes and request a change of address packet.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

We use the following procedure to ensure the safety and well-being of all students at the beginning and end of each day. Please note that when your child is dropped off or picked up daily, or only on occasion, the following procedures must be followed. All doors will be locked throughout the day.

Changes to a child's dismissal plan must be made prior to 3:00 p.m. Written notifications of changes in a dismissal plan (i.e., bus pass or early release) should be submitted to the office in the morning. **No bus passes will be issued after 3:00 p.m.**

Drop Off Times	Procedure Summary
Prior to 8:30 a.m.	Do not drop off your child prior to 8:30 AM. No supervision is available.
8:30 – 8:45 a.m.	<p>Student drop off – you may drop off your child at the handicapped entrance located behind the school. Please follow the semi-circle traffic pattern, so that the arrival process is safe and efficient.</p> <p>At no time should your child be dropped off behind the buses that line up in front of the school. Do not park in the bus unloading area.</p> <p>Children proceed to their classroom.</p> <p>Breakfast will be offered in the cafeteria.</p> <p>Busses unload</p>
9:00 a.m.	Late arrival. Parents/Guardians <u>must</u> escort their child(ren) to the front door. Students must sign in with the main office before proceeding to class.

Pick Up Times	Procedure Summary
Prior to 3:15 p.m. (Early dismissal)	If it is necessary to pick your child up early, an email to your child's teacher and the Main Office on that date will help the teacher and your child to be prepared for the early departure. Please ring the doorbell/monitor to notify the office of your arrival. Instruction continues in the classrooms until 3:25 p.m. Students are reviewing their homework assignments and gathering the necessary materials. We ask that you minimize the number of times you pick up children early, so they have appropriate closure to their school day.
3:25 p.m.	<p>Students dismissed to Exit 2 for legal guardian or delegate pick up - Legal guardians must notify the Main Office via email or handwritten note, if a delegate including a step parent will be picking up their child. Proper ID will be required. Please park in the west-end parking lot by the tennis courts.</p> <p>Note: If you will be picking up your child on the same day every week, you may send in one ongoing email stating which days your child will be picked up and by whom. (Should there be any changes to this dismissal plan, please notify the office via email as soon as possible.)</p>
3:30 p.m.-3:40 p.m.	Students dismiss/busses depart

Buses

Bus assignments including pick-up and drop-off times are viewable on the Parent Portal. If you have any questions regarding your child's bus schedule, please contact the Transportation Department Office at 657-2537.

In the morning, buses begin to arrive at approximately 8:40 a.m. and begin to unload.

In the afternoon, buses begin to assemble to take students home around 3:25 p.m. When all the buses have arrived, students are escorted to their buses at the front of the building. Loaded buses depart the school at approximately 3:40 p.m.

Bus transfers (bus passes) may be issued to a student by the Main Office only upon written request from a parent/guardian. The written request must include the child's full name, date, the classroom teacher's name, the child's destination, the parent's full name, contact phone number (for questions or concerns), and signature. Written requests must be received in the office prior to 3:00 p.m. No bus passes will be issued after 3:00 p.m. For morning pickup, the transfer request should be sent to the school the day before the pickup is needed. **Transfers may be rejected if the bus is at capacity.**

Any alternate transportation arrangements that are needed on a regular basis (ex. childcare situations) should be made with the Transportation Department Office at 845-657-2537.

Walkers

Students identified as walkers by the Transportation Department are released after the buses have departed.

Early Emergency Dismissal (Shout Point Messenger)

During the course of the school year, we face the possibility of early emergency dismissal. Although early dismissals are most often caused by weather, there may be other reasons for early dismissal (heating problems, water problems, etc.)

In the event of an early emergency dismissal, the Onteora Central School District activates the Shout Point Messenger program. This program has the capability to contact the entire District within minutes of an announcement of an early dismissal. Parents/Guardians will be contacted at the phone numbers that are entered in Infinite Campus (our student management system).

Students will follow their normal dismissal plan. If you need to make any changes to your student's dismissal plan, please contact the Main Office as soon as possible. Please review the emergency procedures with your child frequently.

In addition to the messenger system, information can be located on the District's website.

TRANSPORTATION BUS SAFETY RULES

Please review this information with your child.

- 1) Arriving and waiting at bus stop:
 - a) Be ready when the bus arrives – be orderly.
 - b) Wait Fifteen feet from the bus until the bus door opens.
 - c) Enter with care – use the handrail.
- 2) If crossing the street, cross in front of the bus, use the following procedure:
 - a) Stand Fifteen feet from the front bumper and make eye contact with the driver.
 - b) Await a signal from the driver.
 - c) Look both ways before crossing.
 - d) Continue looking while crossing.
 - e) Never go back but continue completely across the roadway.
 - f) If the bus beeps its horn, it signifies danger. Return back to the side of the street.
- 3) Riders should remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- 4) No eating, smoking, vaping or drinking is allowed on school buses.
- 5) Keep head, hands and arms inside.
- 6) Keep the bus clean and aisles clear.
- 7) No pets, animals, glass or sharp objects are allowed on the bus.
- 8) Be courteous and speak quietly.
- 9) No throwing objects in the bus or out of windows or doors.
- 10) Obey all requests of the bus driver.
- 11) Shoving, pushing, profane and obscene language is prohibited on the bus.

Violation of the bus safety rules or misbehavior will result in a referral to the Principal. Consequences usually are progressive in nature. Efforts are made to avoid suspension, but safety cannot be compromised. Your cooperation and support in helping your child review the proper conduct are greatly appreciated.

Bus drills are held at the beginning of the year to prepare children in case of an emergency while on the school bus.

Safety rules and drills are an integral part of our school safety plan.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance will be submitted to the office by the homeroom teacher daily at 9:00 a.m. Students arriving after 9:00 a.m. **must be signed in by a Parent/Guardian.**

Parents are asked to call the school between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. to notify the Health Office of their child's absence at extension 4140. **State law requires that an explanation for the absence be sent to the Main Office (email is best) on the day that your child returns to school. Please send the excuse to the Bennett Office email bennettoffice@onteorak12.ny.us.**

Good attendance is directly related to scholastic success. NYSED has now mandated that all children be in attendance 90% of the school year. Chronic absence from school, which is defined as missing at least ten percent of enrolled days, warrants our urgent attention because it diminishes successful student outcomes and undermines learning. Please know that you will be notified if your child misses 10% of school, which includes excused absences, unexcused absences, and late entry to school. Parents are responsible for their children's regular attendance and punctuality. Resources including posters, parent fliers, examples of successful intervention strategies and programs to reduce chronic absenteeism can be found at <http://www.everystudentpresent.org/>.

The Board of Education recognizes the following as excused absences, each of which must be verified by the student's parent or guardian, in writing, or school personnel, where applicable:

- Illness of the child
- Emergency illness in the family
- Death in the immediate family
- Emergency dental and medical appointments
- Religious observance
- Approved school-sponsored activities
- Court appearance

An email or written note must be provided by the student's parent or guardian to the Main Office, bennettoffice@onteorak12.ny.us, for an absence due to the above reason(s) to be considered legal. No excuse for an absence will be accepted if the excuse is submitted more than three (3) days after the date of absence with the exception of a medical note.

If your child will be leaving school early on a given day, an email should be sent to your child's teacher and the Main Office.

Student Absences due to Family Vacation

The Onteora Central School District strongly supports attendance in school for all students on days when classes are scheduled. The nature of the curriculum and the teaching-learning process itself requires regular student attendance. Missed instruction in school cannot always be easily made up or duplicated. Students' absences from school due to family vacations, by law, must be recorded as unexcused absences.

Accordingly, the following information is provided to parents:

1. It is suggested that family vacations be arranged to coincide with scheduled school vacations.
2. The classroom teachers should be informed of a pending absence two (2) weeks prior to the absence. The teacher will inform parents of any possible implications of the proposed absence and of any expectations or responsibilities a student will have to meet upon returning to class.
3. Teachers will furnish assignments as deemed appropriate, when possible.
4. Teachers will determine the extent and the manner in which missed work will be completed.
5. Teachers may provide an opportunity for test make-ups.

District Code of Conduct Summary **The Code of Conduct can be found on the Onteora CSD website.**

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

The Onteora Board of Education hopes that our students will become passionate learners who are empowered to achieve their dreams and act as good citizens of the world and of their community at large.

To achieve this goal, the Board strives to provide safe schools for all students and to ensure that all members of the school community assume personal responsibility and behave with a sense of mutual respect. The Board recognizes that to maintain such an environment, we must all live within certain boundaries and that inappropriate action by one person can infringe upon the rights of another. When conflicts arise, we are committed to nonviolent resolutions that encourage personal growth, responsibility, and recovery and that treat each individual with respect and dignity.

This Code of Conduct describes the behavior that the Board expects from all members of the school community, identifies consequences if those standards are not met, and establishes procedures to ensure that discipline, when necessary, is prompt, fair, progressive, and effective.

A full copy of the Code of Conduct may be found on the District website, www.onteora.k12.ny.us. See Attachment A of the full Code for a definition of terms used in this document.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students have a right to:

- A free, appropriate public education that will prepare them for active citizenship in a democracy.
- A safe and secure environment that promotes academic and social/emotional learning.
- Speak and be heard.
- Take part in any school activity on an equal basis.
- Be treated with courtesy and respect.
- Freedom from bullying, harassment, and other abuse based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.
- Academic and emotional support.
- Express themselves through their choices in clothing and appearance.
- Communicate thoughts and beliefs that do not interfere with the rights of others or school operations.
- Assemble peacefully.
- Learn strategies that develop cooperation, tolerance, and conflict resolution.
- Be informed of school policies and rules.

Students have the responsibility to:

- Refrain from violence. Notify an adult of the presence of drugs, alcohol, weapons, harassment, and other violent acts or threats of violence.
- Attend classes, observe school rules, and work for satisfactory achievement.
- Listen to others.
- Participate and support others in school events.
- Be courteous and respectful.
- Speak up about and refrain from bullying, harassment, and other abuse based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.
- Ask for help when it is needed and offer help to peers when needed.
- Adhere to the school Dress Code.
- Show consideration for people whose beliefs differ from their own.
- Get permission from appropriate school personnel before assembling.
- Use cooperative solutions.
- Abide by the Code of Conduct.

Expected Behavior

All members of the school community should respect the rights and welfare of others, act ethically, and care for school facilities and equipment. The Board expects respectful behavior and civil conduct on all school property, including buses, and at all school functions, whether on or off school property. The Board will not tolerate:

- Threats of violence in school.
- Possession or use of weapons or illegal materials.
- Possession, distribution, use, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances (including synthetic drugs).
- Behaviors that infringe on the physical, social, mental, or emotional well-being of others, or that disrupt the safety and support of the educational environment.

- Bullying, harassment, or discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex, or for any other reason.
- Academic misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, cheating, copying, altering records, forging documents such as passes, notes, etc., assisting another student in any of these actions).
- Damage to school property, including buses, or the property of others.
- The physical or electronic dissemination, posting, or sharing of materials that are obscene, advocate illegal action, or appear libelous to students or faculty.
- The posting of materials without the consent of the building administrator.
- Entering or remaining on school property without authorization.
- Violation of any federal, State or local law, or Board policy.

Dignity for All Students Act

The Board of Education recognizes that a learning environment that is safe and supportive can increase student attendance and improve academic achievement. A student’s ability to learn and achieve high academic standards, and a school’s ability to educate students, is compromised by incidents of discrimination or harassment, including but not limited to bullying, taunting, hazing, and intimidation. The District will strive to create an environment free of discrimination and harassment and will foster civility in the schools to prevent and prohibit conduct that is inconsistent with the District’s educational mission.

The District condemns and prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment of students based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex by school employees or students on school property or at school-sponsored events and activities that take place on or off of school property. In addition, any act of discrimination or harassment outside of school-sponsored events that can reasonably be expected to materially and substantially disrupt the educational process may be subject to discipline. (See District Policy 3420.)

District’s Title IX Nondiscrimination Statement

The Onteora Central School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and its regulations, including in admission and employment.

Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the District’s Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, or both. The District’s Title IX Coordinator is Stephanie Laffin, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, 4166 Route 28, Boiceville, NY 12412, email: TitleIX@onteora.k12.ny.us. The contact information for OCR is [found here](#).

The District’s [Nondiscrimination Policy 6120](#) and [grievance procedure](#) are available in the Onteora School District Policy Manual.

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please send an email to TitleIX@onteora.k12.ny.us. You may also refer to [Policy 3420](#), [Policy 3421](#), and [Policy 3421.1](#) which can also be found in the District’s Policy Manual.

Dress Code

All students and staff should show healthy and respectful attention to their personal cleanliness and clothing. Adults should model and reinforce acceptable dress for students.

Reporting Code Violations

Each individual in the school community has the responsibility to report Code violations that they witness. Violations involving weapons, alcohol, bullying, harassment and intimidation, or illegal substances (including synthetic drugs such as synthetic cannabinoids) must be reported immediately. Students should report violations to the building principal, social worker, teacher, or any adult they trust. Adults should report violations in accordance with District policies. When Code violations break not only school policy but also the law, the school principal or designee may consult with the Superintendent of Schools to determine if law enforcement notification/involvement is warranted. Building/District administrators reserve the right to notify law enforcement agencies at their discretion.

Discipline

The Board believes that the best discipline is that which is self-imposed. Adults should model self-discipline and help students accept responsibility for their actions.

Disciplinary action should be used only when necessary and in accordance with applicable contracts, laws, regulations, and policies. Such actions should not just punish, but also encourage personal growth and individual responsibility. Staff members authorized to impose discipline should act in a prompt, fair, progressive and problem-solving manner. School personnel administering student discipline should consider:

- The student's age, learning style, and prior disciplinary record.
- The nature and circumstances of the offense.
- The effectiveness of any prior discipline.
- Information from parents/guardians, teachers, or others, as appropriate.
- Other extenuating circumstances.

Consequences. For students, these can range from an oral warning to permanent school suspension. Disciplinary action against staff will conform to law and applicable contracts.

Visitors will

be asked to leave the building. See Attachment D for a more detailed description of possible consequences.

Procedures. All disciplinary actions should adhere to District contracts, regulations, and policies. Students accused of misconduct should be told by authorized personnel of the nature of the

accusation. If necessary, authorized school staff should investigate the facts surrounding the alleged misconduct. Students will have an opportunity to tell their version of the event

Students subject to penalties other than an oral or written warning or a written notification to their parents/guardians are entitled to additional rights before the consequence is imposed. See Attachment F for more information.

Minimum suspensions. A student who brings a weapon to school will be suspended for at least one calendar year, unless the Superintendent modifies the penalty based upon the student’s age, grade, prior disciplinary record, the belief that other forms of discipline may be more effective, other relevant information from parent(s), teacher(s), or others, or other extenuating circumstances. A student who commits any other violent act or who repeatedly and substantially disrupts the educational process could be suspended for at least five days, unless the Superintendent modifies the consequence.

Alternative instruction for disciplined students. The District will provide alternative instruction within a reasonable amount of time to students removed from classes by teachers or suspended from school.

Referrals. Students may be referred for counseling, in-house District programs (e.g., Prime for Life, Peer Mediation, etc.), a Person in Need of Supervision petition through Family Court, or juvenile delinquency proceedings.

Disciplining students with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities who are determined to have committed an act of misconduct will be referred to the District’s Committee on Special Education (CSE). A student will not be punished if the CSE determines that the conduct stems from the student’s disability. But when the CSE determines that discipline is warranted, the resulting disciplinary action will conform to the federal and State laws and regulations that govern the discipline of students with disabilities. Such students will not receive harsher punishments than students who are not disabled.

Student Searches and Interrogations

Searches. Police, as well as the Superintendent and District/building administrators, may search students and their possessions if there is reasonable suspicion.

By bringing a personal electronic device (including, but not limited to, cellular phones, smart phones, tablets, and laptops) to school, the student consents to a search of the device when school officials have reasonable suspicion that such a search will reveal a violation of the District Code of Conduct.

The scope of the search will be limited to the violation the student is accused of. Content or images that violate State or federal laws will be referred to law enforcement. The school district will cooperate with law enforcement officials as appropriate.

School computers, desks, lockers, and storage spaces are school property and may be opened and inspected by school officials without prior notice or student consent. Video surveillance footage may be accessed as part of a search process, consistent with District policies.

Questioning

School officials may question students about possible violations of school rules. The student’s parents/guardians may be contacted, depending upon the circumstances. The police may enter the schools if a crime has been committed on school property, they have an arrest or search warrant, or if they have been invited by school officials. Prior to questioning students, police must read them their “Miranda rights,” and school administrators or police must diligently try to notify the students’ parents/guardians and give them the opportunity to be present.

Child Protective Services may interview students on school property without notification to the parents/guardians regarding allegations of suspected child abuse, maltreatment, or neglect (including educational neglect).

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

Electronic devices should not be brought to school; however, parents may choose to give their child a device to be used only on the bus. Students are NOT allowed to record or take pictures on the bus.

Mobile phones, IPOD devices, smartwatches, or any device capable of recording audio, photographic, or video content interfere with the academic environment of the school. **AT NO TIME IS A STUDENT ALLOWED TO RECORD OR TAKE PICTURES OF OTHER STUDENTS DUE TO THE POTENTIAL OF FERPA VIOLATIONS.** Considering the potential for distraction and additional problems, all equipment must be turned off and not visible during school hours unless authorized by school personnel. Any student observed with such devices will be referred to the building administrator. In the event that a student is observed utilizing an electronic device, it will be confiscated and returned only to the student's parent/guardian by the building administrator or designee.

School-issued Chromebooks that are brought home, can only be used for school assignments. These are not to be used as personal devices.

School Visitors

The Board recognizes that the success of the school program depends, in part, on support from the larger community. The Board wishes to foster a positive climate where community members have the opportunity to observe the hard work and accomplishments of the students, teachers, and other staff. Since schools are a place of work and learning, however, certain limits must be set for such visits. The Principal or their designee is responsible for all persons in the building and on the grounds during the school day. For these reasons, the following rules apply to visitors to the schools:

1. Anyone who is not a staff member assigned to the school or a student of the school will be considered a visitor. The District reserves the right to refuse admission to any visitor at any time if the visitor or any current condition dictates that it is unsafe. Visitors during the school day must have an appointment prior to their arrival at the school building.
2. Any employee not assigned to the building must either wear their school-issued identification from the current school year or a badge as printed from the visitor management system (Raptor) while in the building they are visiting.
3. All visitors to the school must enter through the designated single point of entry and report to the office of the Principal or the designated location for visitor check-in upon arrival at the school. There they will be required to present photo identification, allow staff to check them in through our visitor management system (Raptor), and will be issued a visitor's identification badge, which must be worn at all times while in the school or on school grounds. The visitor may be asked to leave an item as collateral such as car keys that will be returned to them when the identification badge is returned. The visitor must return the identification badge to the Principal's office or designated check-in location before leaving the building.

4. Visitors attending school functions that are open to the public after regular school hours, such as parent-teacher organization meetings or public gatherings, are not generally required to register, but if the situation warrants it, pre-registration may be required.
5. Any visitor participating in a school or classroom activity while school is in session must have pre-approval from the classroom teacher(s) and building Principal to minimize the disruption to the educational environment. If a visitor is on the National Registry of Sex Offenders, appropriate steps will be taken to verify the visitor's identity and provide authorization to enter the premises.
6. Teachers are expected not to take class time to discuss individual matters with visitors unless the visitor has made an appointment to discuss a specific topic.
7. Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to the Principal or their designee. Unauthorized persons will be asked to leave. The police may be called if the situation warrants.
8. All visitors are expected to abide by the rules for public conduct on school property contained in the code of conduct.

Adoption date: 11/10/2020

Reviewed: 03/19/2024

Public Conduct on School Property

The District is committed to providing an orderly, respectful, and safe environment that is conducive to learning. All persons on school property or attending a school function, whether on or off school property shall conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner. No person, either alone or with others, while on school property or attending a school function, shall:

- Intentionally injure or threaten to injure any person.
- Intentionally damage or destroy school property or the property of others, or remove or use such property without authorization.
- Disrupt the orderly conduct of classes, school programs, and activities.
- Distribute or wear materials that are obscene, advocate illegal action, appear libelous, obstruct the rights of others, or are disruptive to the school program.
- Intimidate, harass, or discriminate against any person on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, creed, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability or any other discriminatory reason.
- Harass, including creating a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation, bullying, cyber bullying, or other abuse, as defined in Attachment A.
- Statements or threats that put an individual in fear of bodily harm.
- Enter any school property without authorization or remain in any school premises after it is closed.
- Obstruct the free movement of any person.
- Violate traffic laws, parking regulations, or other vehicle restrictions.
- Possess, consume, sell, distribute, or exchange alcoholic beverages, tobacco, or controlled substances (including synthetic drugs such as synthetic cannabinoids), or be under the influence of any of the above.

- Possess or use weapons (unless specifically authorized by the District).
- Loiter, gamble, litter, spit, or urinate in public.
- Refuse to comply with reasonable directives of school officials while they are performing their duty.
- Willfully incite others to commit any acts prohibited by the Code of Conduct.
- Violate any federal or State law, local ordinance, or Board policy.

At a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the Board or the Code of Conduct Committee will present any Code revisions for review.

8/8/24 Updated

PROMOTION, RETENTION, AND ACCELERATION OF STUDENTS

School Board Policy #7212

The Onteora CSD will ensure that each child experiences both challenge and success in school activities. To this end, the District will make every effort to place each student at the most appropriate learning level for a successful educational experience. The concept of grade placement is based on the premise that each teacher will provide appropriate opportunities for students at all stages of physical, emotional, and academic growth. Academic growth does not take place at the same pace, and promotion, retention, and acceleration are added methods to meet the needs of individual students.

Promotion, retention, and acceleration of a student will be based on the following general considerations:

1. Academic achievement;
2. Age of the student;
3. Teacher and principal recommendations in consultation with the parents/guardians; and
4. Where the decision for retention is in question, the principal will have the final authority;

The Administration will develop regulations to establish guidelines and procedures for decisions regarding promotion, retention, and acceleration.

In order to inform parents/guardians about the District's approach to promotion and retention, this policy will be posted on the district website and included in student and/or parent handbooks.

Ref: Education Law §§ 305(47); 1709; 2503(4); 3202
 8 NYCRR §100.4
Isquith v. Levitt, 285 App. Div. 833; 137 N.Y.S.2d 497 (1955)
Matter of Eckert, 13 EDR 270 (1979)
 Op. Counsel, 1 EDR 775 (1952)
 OCSD Regulation 7212R

Adopted: 10/13/15

FOOD SERVICES

The District is using Infinite Campus to support the Food Services program in all schools. All positive account balances will be the same when the students return to school in September as they were before summer vacation. Parents/guardians have the option of checking their child's account history online and making deposits to their accounts there as well. You may request account histories to be sent to you, and cash or checks may be sent in to place money in your child's account. The breakfast/lunch menu is distributed to all students each month and can also be found on the district website.

The following is the cost of meals and milk for this school year:

K-5	Breakfast No Charge Lunch No Charge
6-8	Breakfast No Charge Lunch No Charge
9-12	Breakfast No Charge Lunch No Charge
Milk	\$0.50

The District strives to serve healthy options and our fresh ingredients are purchased locally whenever possible.

To help expedite the handling of your student's account, we strongly encourage parents/guardians to do the following.

- Pre-pay for your student's a la carte purchases on a weekly, monthly, or yearly basis. Please keep in mind this is a debit account.
- Meal charge policy can be found on our district website. District > Food Services
- **If you had spending limits set on your child's account last year, please contact Christine Downs, Director of Food Services, to re-activate those limits. Otherwise, your child will not have a set-spending limit. Also, please contact the District if your child requires special meal accommodations. A detailed diet plan is required by a physician annually, at the start of a new school year, in order for the District to accommodate the request.**

Free or Reduced Meals

We are pleased to inform you that Bennett Elementary will be implementing a meal certification option available to schools participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs for 2024-2025.

All students enrolled at Bennett Elementary are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at school at **no charge** to your household each day of the 2024-2025 school year.

Breakfast Program

The Food Service Department serves breakfast each day. All students are eligible to participate in this program.

Snacks

Snacks are made available daily for children **to purchase** during their scheduled classroom snack times. Students will not be allowed to charge snacks; therefore, it is important to keep a positive balance in their lunch account. Children may also bring snacks from home. Healthy snacks are encouraged. We also encourage students to take the grab-and-go breakfast when they arrive, even if they ate at home, this can act as their snack for the day.

Lunch from Home

Students must bring lunches that are ready to eat. There are no microwaves.

Beverages brought from home should be packed in appropriate (leakproof, reusable) containers. Under no circumstances should beverages be sent in glass containers.

If there is an occasional day when a parent brings lunch to a child, it must be brought to the office, and office staff will deliver it to your child. Doing this on a daily basis is disruptive to the class.

Cafeteria Rules:

- a. Sit in a safe and acceptable manner.
- b. Use acceptable table manners.
- c. No Sharing of Food
- d. Use appropriate language.
- e. Speak in conversational tones.
- f. Cooperate with peers and adults.
- g. Respect the rights and property of others.
- h. Raise your hand and wait for permission before leaving your seat.
- i. Remain seated until called upon by an adult.
- j. Don't leave the cafeteria without permission.
- k. When an adult raises their hand or counts, quiet down immediately.

Peanut/Tree Nut Procedures

We care about all our students at Bennett Elementary and have become a "nut-aware" school in order to provide a safe environment for students who are allergic to nuts. We do not want anything to happen to these children, nor do we want other children to witness trauma. Either situation could be devastating. The steps we have taken are:

1. Instead of peanut butter and jelly as a cold lunch offering, students may select a "Sunbutter" and jelly, turkey, tuna, ham, cheese sandwich, or salad plate. Please see the lunch menu for a complete list of options. Cereals and snacks containing nuts have also been eliminated.
2. We have designated "nut-free" tables in the cafeteria, which are cleaned with different cleaning supplies. We request that parents try to minimize sending in peanut butter on sandwiches. Peanut butter will be allowed; however, your child will have to sit with other classmates on the opposite side of the cafeteria away from the "nut-free" tables. There will be no repercussions or discomfort for your child. We will also require these children to wash

their hands after eating. If a nut/peanut allergic child touches something after someone who has touched these products, a severe reaction could occur.

3. All common rooms will be nut free. Foods containing nuts will not be allowed. If students bring in items with nuts, they will follow the same procedure as the procedure in the cafeteria (see above). We recognize that nuts are good and healthy snacks for most children. We also know that students are in school only 6 hours each day and that there are other snacks that are just as healthy and will help others in our school community.

COMMUNICATION

Bennett Open House

Please refer to the District Calendar for the date and time our Open House will take place.

This Open House will also allow parents the opportunity to visit their child's classroom and meet their teacher. This night is designed for the teachers to speak with all parents about the curriculum for the year, daily schedules, classroom rules and expectations, and any special activities that will be occurring during the year. This is a time for parents only – students should *not* attend.

Please note that Open House is not an appropriate time to discuss personal concerns. These topics are best handled during a private conference. Do not hesitate to schedule a conference to discuss these matters.

Conferences

Within the Onteora School District, many programs are available to encourage all students to succeed. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child, please do not hesitate to schedule a conference with your child's teacher or the principal.

Parent-teacher conferences are planned two times per year. The dates for these conferences can be found in the School District Calendar. It is the teacher's goal to invite each child's parents/guardian at least once per year.

Parents are welcome and encouraged to talk with their child's teachers during the school year. Appointments must be made to coincide with the teachers' schedules. Please contact the teacher to set up an appointment.

Parent Portal

The Portal is a secure website that allows parents to monitor their child's progress in school. As a parent, you can monitor your child's daily attendance and grades (K-5), as well as have access to your child's lunch account, health records, and assessments. *It is designed to increase the communication between parents, the school, and the teacher, which will be used to communicate with you on a regular basis.*

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an important part of the educational process. Field trips are designed to enhance the curriculum and to give students an opportunity to visit locations that they might otherwise not have the opportunity to explore.

The District provides bus transportation for field trips. By law, children must report to school on the morning of the field trip and ride the bus to the destination in order to be marked as in attendance and be part of the class trip. If a parent/guardian transports a child directly to the field trip location, the child will be marked absent (and will not be covered by the school's insurance for the day).

If a parent/guardian wishes to take their child directly from the field trip location, a note must be sent to the school stating this, prior to the field trip. The parent/guardian must sign the child out with the teacher in charge of the trip.

PLAYGROUND RULES

Students must follow the rules listed below to assure their own safety and the safety of others. This information will be reviewed with the children by the physical education teacher, the classroom teacher, and the teaching assistants on duty.

1. Children must remain inside the fenced areas at all times.
2. If equipment goes outside the fence, get an adult to help.
3. Fighting, play fighting, wrestling, roughhousing, tackle football, dodgeball, throwing stones/woodchips/snowballs, or any activity which is dangerous or annoying to other children, is not acceptable. If a child feels that they are going to be hurt or that someone else may be hurt they should tell an adult. Everyone should have the opportunity to play fairly.
4. Picnic tables are for sitting at...not climbing on.
5. No running on wood-chipped areas.
6. Running and tagging games in grass areas only.
7. Slides are one-way. Slide down only. Take turns. One child on the slide per time.
8. Do not walk on the wood chips by the swings unless you are using the swings. Pay Attention!
9. You must be seated when on the swings.
10. Do not hang upside down off high bars.
11. Children must return to the building when directed by staff.
12. When using the climbing structures:
 - ~Children should not crowd each other and they should take turns.
 - ~Children should use a tight grip on the bars.
 - ~Children should keep their hands to themselves.
14. Appropriate clothing for weather conditions, i.e., snow play (snow pants, boots, gloves, etc.)
15. Appropriate footwear during recess – **flip flops, sandals without a strap around the ankle, or high-heeled shoes will not be allowed on the Netplex.** Sneakers are recommended for recess and required for Physical Education class.

SAFETY DRILLS

According to state law, safety drills are held throughout the school year to ensure that children, teachers, and staff are familiar with the best possible emergency safety procedures.

The safety drills include fire drills and lockdown drills.

- **Fire Drill** - Students and Staff will evacuate the building via the closest exit.
- **Lockdown** - implemented when there is an incident in the school building. The doors throughout the building are locked and students must stay in their classrooms, away from the doors and windows.

Health Services

Onteora Central School District's School Health Services program supports your student's academic success by promoting health in the school setting. One way that we provide care for your student is by performing the health screenings as mandated by the State of New York.

Each building has a Health Office with a School Nurse.

Immunizations:

All entering students (kindergarten and new to the district) are required by New York State Education Law to be immunized against diphtheria, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps, rubella (German measles), varicella, Hepatitis B, age-appropriate Tdap and meningococcal vaccines. Proof of immunizations by a Health Care Provider (HCP) or previous school record is required as acceptable documentation of the immunization status.

During the school year, the following screenings are required:

- Vision – distance and near acuity for all newly entering students and students in kindergarten, grades 1, 3, 5, 7, & 11.
- Hearing – hearing screening for all new entrants and students in kindergarten, grades 1, 3, 5, 7, & 11.
- Scoliosis - scoliosis (spinal curvature) screening for all girls in grades 5 and 7, and all boys in grade 9.
- Health Appraisals - a physical exam, including Body Mass Index (BMI) and Weight Status Category is required for all new entrants and students in kindergarten, grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, & 11. If we do not receive a physical from your health care provider by September 30, a school physical exam will be scheduled.
- Body Mass Index Reporting (BMI) – as part of a required school health exam, a student is to have their height and weight measured. The results are then used to compute the student's BMI. The BMI helps the doctor or nurse know if the student's weight is in a healthy range, too low, or too high. Periodically schools are requested to report to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) information about our students' weight status groups. **Only summary information is sent, no student names or identifying information.** However, you may choose to have your child's information excluded from this survey report. **IF you do not wish to have your child's weight status group information included as part of the Health Departments survey, please SEND WRITTEN notice to the school nurse.**

The information sent to the NYSDOH will help health officials develop programs that make it easier for children to be healthier.

- Dental Certificates – a dental certificate is requested for all new entrants and students in kindergarten, grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 & 11.

A letter will be sent home if there are any findings on the screenings done at school that would cause concern or need medical follow-up. Please call the school's health office if you have any questions or concerns.

First Aid:

In cases of accidents or illness, the school district is responsible for immediate first aid care. Parents will be notified. The subsequent treatment and transportation of the ill or injured student becomes parental responsibility. All injuries incurred in school must be reported to the teacher, supervisor, or bus driver in charge, and the student must report to the health office. The health office must receive a report of injury since the appropriate recording and insurance follow-up is very important and must be completed promptly. *If students become ill or injured during school hours, they must report to the health office.*

Basic Health Rules:

1. Keep your child home if your child has any of the following conditions:
 - a. Fever (temperature of 100 degrees or more)
 - b. Fever during the previous 24 hours
 - c. Heavy nasal discharge
 - d. Persistent cough
 - e. Overtired and generally not feeling well
 - f. Vomiting and/or diarrhea within 24 hours of the start of the school day
 - g. Rash of unknown origin
2. If a child's health is in doubt upon entering school or during the school day, the parents/guardians will be notified to pick up the child.
3. Parents/guardians should notify the Health Office whenever a child is absent. This is especially true if the child has been exposed to, or diagnosed with a contagious disease (chicken pox, mono, strep throat, etc.), even if they have been home for several days.
4. A child with a fever cannot return to school until fever free for 24 hours without any fever reducing medications (i.e., Tylenol, ibuprofen, etc.).
5. Send in a written note whenever the child returns to school from an absence.
6. Notify School Nurse as soon as possible if a child has tested positive for COVID-19.
7. If your child has been evaluated by a health care provider due to an injury, please request a note that clears them to return to school and specifies activity restrictions if necessary.
8. Contact School Nurse if any questions or concerns.

Medication Administration:

If it becomes necessary for a student to take any form of medication at school, the following steps must be followed:

1. A written order from the health care provider must be obtained which includes the student's name, medication, dosage, and time to be given at school.
2. Permission must be given in writing by the parent/guardian, in order for the medication to be given at school.
3. The medication must be delivered to the school by an adult in its original container, properly identified with the student's name, date prescribed, name of medication, dosage, and instructions for administering (if it is a prescription medication, the medication must be delivered in the original pharmacy container. We recommend asking the pharmacy at the time of filling the prescription for a second labeled bottle, so one can be kept at home and one sent to school).

4. The medication must be kept in the health office in a locked cabinet (see below for exceptions*).
5. At no time should a student have prescription or non-prescription medication/drugs on them*.
6. If a student is to self-carry medication, it is to be noted on the medication order form, and the self-carry attestation form must be completed as well. School personnel may not dispense any medications including over the counter medications unless the above conditions have been met.

*Some conditions may necessitate that a child carry and self-administer their medication. Examples would be an inhaler for severe asthma or an Epi-pen for serious allergies. The school should have knowledge of these medications prior to a student bringing them to school. They require all of the above written permissions and an attestation form completed by parent and medical provider to self-carry and self-administer. Ritalin, anti-seizure drugs and antibiotics are examples of non-emergency medications, and must be administered through the health office. If you believe your child has a potential emergency health need, please consult with the school nurse to develop an emergency care plan. Students may not possess, consume, or distribute any type of medication without the approval of the school's administration and/or the health office.

These policies and procedures are necessary to insure the health and safety of the entire student body. We appreciate your cooperation and compliance.

Hand Sanitizers:

Alcohol based hand sanitizers can be used in school. If you do not want your child to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, you MUST notify the nurse in writing.

Physical Education and Sports:

Medical excuses pertaining to Physical Education must be obtained from the student's health provider. The document should be brought to the Health Office prior to the start of class. The Health Office will supply the Physical Education teacher with documentation of doctor's note. A student may not participate in any Physical Education classes until cleared, in writing, by their health provider. If a student is expected to be out of physical education class for any extended time, there is a form that can be given to the doctor to determine if any adaptive measures can allow student to participate.

In order to be cleared for activities after a concussion, a physician must clear the student to return to activity. Upon private physician clearance, the school medical director, will clear the student to begin the return to play protocol. Once the student has completed the return to play protocol, the student will be able to participate in all activities.

Before a student is allowed to participate in any interscholastic athletic activity, the student must have a current physical exam on file, be registered on Family ID for sport including recent health history (each season), and be approved by the school's medical director.

General:

Please notify your School Nurse of any changes in your child's health history throughout the school year. It is important to keep your School Nurse informed of any changes in your child's health. This would include any newly diagnosed allergies, asthma, food sensitivities/preferences, new medications, as well as any new illnesses or injuries.

HOMEWORK

The educators at Bennett Elementary value meaningful homework because it provides an opportunity for students to practice and reinforce skills and concepts that are taught in class. Reading and writing reflection each night promotes learning in all subject areas. Math homework helps students develop necessary foundational skills. Homework helps to foster strong work habits and student independence.

What is homework? It is a planned part of the curriculum, extending and reinforcing the learning experience of the school. In addition, homework is:

1. Additional practice to strengthen new skills introduced in the classroom;
2. Work on projects of short-term or long-term nature;
3. Participation in research activities in locating facts and data;
4. Extended reading/writing assignments.

Whenever homework exists in our school system, it should supplement, complement (through differentiation), and reinforce classroom teaching and learning.

Parental Role: It is crucial that parents support and have an active role in their child's academic life. Student growth will be ensured when parents and teachers work together in a combined effort to support and encourage student learning; this includes homework.

Independent Reading (Readers Workshop): Readers Workshop requires that students read independently in their "just right" book that correlates with the current Unit of Study and is included in the minutes below.

Time Guidelines for Homework (includes independent reading) – These guidelines specify the **approximate** range spent on homework assignments:

- K-2: homework will begin slowly leading to reading 10-15 minutes a day after school
- Grade 3: 25-35 minutes
- Grade 4: 35-45 minutes
- Grade 5: 45-55 minutes

Homework will not be assigned over school breaks. Every effort will be made to keep homework to a minimum on weekends. Homework may be assigned five nights per week. Assignments given weekly may need to be completed by students on weekends if that is how a student chooses to manage his or her time.

Homework should be a topic of communication between parents and teachers. These procedures recognize and allow for exceptions and extenuating circumstances.

PTA

The Bennett PTA is a vital and active part of the Bennett School Community. Parents are encouraged to participate. Meetings are held monthly. Check the district calendar for dates and times. If you are unable to attend the meetings but would like to volunteer, please contact one of the PTA officers. We seek your involvement and participation as we work together to create an exceptional school for our children.

OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

A child's parents/guardians and the school share the responsibility for establishing an educational climate that will encourage each child's maximum growth. As the parent looks to the school to provide the facilities and the personnel, which are essential to the child's proper development, the school looks to the parent to assume certain obligations, which cannot be delegated to others.

A school can be effective in teaching the commonly accepted virtues of honesty, respect for authority, consideration for the rights and property of others, and adequate standards or personal integrity when the basic principles have been established and are held in sufficiently high regard in the home.

When parents have confidence in the school and cooperate with its programs and they show respect for the sincerity and integrity of its teachers, this is quite likely to be reflected in wholesome attitudes on the part of their child(ren).

- ❖ Take an interest in your child's work and encourage maximum effort.
- ❖ Become acquainted with the school, its programs, and its staff through scheduled teacher conferences, attendance at Parent Night programs, and participation in PTA affairs.
- ❖ Provide adequate supervision over study habits, instrument practicing, meeting of school obligations, health habits, and recreational activities.
- ❖ Cooperate with supporting teachers who find it necessary to contact you regarding your child's progress or problems your child may be having in school.
- ❖ When possible, time your vacations to coincide with school vacations.
- ❖ Help your child understand that school is their work and that regular and punctual attendance is expected, as is appropriate dress.
- ❖ If there is something troubling your child, please contact his/her teacher. If you need more assistance, please contact the principal.
- ❖ Parents/guardians are not allowed in the lunchroom without permission from the principal.
- ❖ Put your child's name on clothing and lunch boxes. The lost and found is located near the nurse's office.