

## Betsy Ross School Parent Handbook 2025-2026



### **Betsy Ross Pledge**

*I am a citizen of Betsy Ross School. I will do my best to treat others with kindness and respect and follow the school rules.*

The staff of Betsy Ross School is committed to the education of the whole child. We, as educators of primary-aged children, are in the unique position of helping children form their lifelong attitude towards learning, as well as contributing to the development of their values and character. We are your partners in this important endeavor and consider this a privilege. Young children are precious works in progress. We strive to create a responsive school that furthers children's academic, social, and emotional development.

Betsy Ross is *your* school. Each of you has an important role in making it truly outstanding. The Betsy Ross School Pledge is recited daily at our opening exercises. Please discuss it frequently with your children and reinforce its meaning.

## **WELCOME**

Dear Parents and Families,

This Parent-Student Handbook contains a wealth of information that can be used as a guide to help you throughout the school year. It is designed to help you learn more about our school and to serve as a reference for information related to school procedures, policies, and regulations. Providing a safe, welcoming, inclusive, and structured environment is essential for student success.

We look forward to working with you and your child and invite you to ask questions and seek out the expertise of our staff. We are committed to working in partnership with you to make your experiences at Betsy Ross School positive and productive.

With Betsy Pride,

Michael Henzel  
Principal

---

## **MAHWAH BOARD OF EDUCATION**

### **ADMINISTRATION**

Dr. Michael DeTuro.....Superintendent  
Dr. Dennis M. Fare.....Assistant Superintendent  
Mr. Thomas Lambe.....Business Administrator  
Ms. Jodie Craft.....Director of Curriculum and Instruction  
Ms. Lisa Rizzo.....Director of Special Services  
Ms. Tracy Spindler.....Supervisor of Transportation

[www.mahwah.k12.nj.us](http://www.mahwah.k12.nj.us)

## BETSY ROSS STAFF

|                                  |                    |              |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>Principal</b>                 | Michael Henzel     | 201-762-2251 |
| <b>Secretary</b>                 | Christine Noonan   | 201-762-2251 |
| <b>Nurse</b>                     | Jennifer Blackford | 201-762-2253 |
| <b>SSO</b>                       | Harry Hunt         | 201-762-2251 |
| <b>CST - School Psychologist</b> | Cydney Rockman     | 201-762-2297 |

| <u>Kindergarten</u> | <u>1st Grade</u> | <u>2nd Grade</u>   | <u>3rd Grade</u> | <u>K-3 Support</u> |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Jillian Laurice     | Ally Bauer       | Lori Bregman       | Angela Nocito    | Jennifer Ehrenberg |
| Stacey Shapiro      | Marcy Pestreich  | Emma Conroy        | Erin Seifert     | Alexis Pirretti    |
| Kelly Smith         | Christina Rainey | Stephanie Engstrom | Courtney Byrnes  | Laura Landesman    |

| <u>Reading Specialist</u> | <u>Math Specialist</u> | <u>Speech/Language Therapist</u> | <u>Social Worker</u> | <u>School Counselor</u> |
|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Lauren Sullivan           | Emily Shapiro          | Gabrielle Zimmer                 | Brittany Ritterman   | Kyla Murphy             |

| <u>Art</u>   | <u>Library/Coding</u> | <u>Music</u> | <u>Physical Education</u> | <u>ESL/Spanish</u> |
|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Skylar Teats | Kaelah Steenstra      | Greg Baker   | Jason Schmitt             | Amy Rogers         |

| <u>Paraprofessionals</u> |             |                   |               |                    |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Amber Cusack             | JoAnn Hunt  | Beenish Khurram   | Jeanne Morris | Allison Schlackman |
| Mary Flannery            | Shawn Kell  | Jodi Kunisch      | Tara Pragdat  | Audrey VonZwehl    |
| Karan Hallak             | Safina Khan | Ann Marie McMahon | Deepa Rau     |                    |

| <u>Instructional Coaches</u> |            |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Jennifer Hogan               | Talya Cole |

| <u>Head Custodian</u> |
|-----------------------|
| Guillermo Gamez       |

## IMPORTANT CONTACTS

|                                      |                              |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <u>Wyckoff Family YMCA Aftercare</u> | <u>Betsy Ross Fax Number</u> |
| 201-891-2081                         | 201-831-0568                 |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <u>District Webpage</u>   | <u>Betsy Ross Webpage</u>   |
| <a href="https://www.mahwah.k12.nj.us/">https://www.mahwah.k12.nj.us/</a> | <a href="https://br.mahwah.k12.nj.us/">https://br.mahwah.k12.nj.us/</a> |

### Email Contacts

[Firstinitiallastname@mahwah.k12.nj.us](mailto:Firstinitiallastname@mahwah.k12.nj.us)

example: Christine Noonan - [cnoonan@mahwah.k12.nj.us](mailto:cnoonan@mahwah.k12.nj.us)

---

### Betsy Ross HSO Executive Board 2025-2026

**Melissa Polster/Renee Salemmo – Co-Presidents**

**Renuka Hare – Vice President**

**John Morin – Secretary**

**Shannon F. Testa– Treasurer**

### **HOME SCHOOL ORGANIZATION (HSO)**

All Betsy Ross parents are automatically members of our HSO. The purpose of the HSO is to provide parental support to the school, students, faculty, and administration. This includes raising funds through various projects that help enrich each student's educational experience.

The Betsy Ross HSO sponsors or provides assistance for the following events:

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Assembly Programs       | Library Volunteers                        |
| Back-to-School Supplies | Math Mania                                |
| Book Fair               | Nature Center                             |
| Class Parent Volunteers | School Sweatshirt/T-shirt Sales (Apparel) |
| Class Parties           | Science Day                               |
| Family Night            | Staff Appreciation Luncheons              |
| Field Day               | Walk-A-Thon                               |
| Holiday Boutique        |   |

HSO meetings are held once a month (with the exception of December). Contact email: [betsyrosshso@gmail.com](mailto:betsyrosshso@gmail.com)

## BUILDING SAFETY/VISITORS

To ensure the safety of our students, our exterior doors are locked during the official school day. All visitors (including parent volunteers) to Betsy Ross School must ring the bell at the front door, door #3, to be buzzed in. All visitors will be required to use their license to gain entrance to the building using the computer in the vestibule. A visitor's badge to wear while inside the building will be provided to you at the greeter's desk.

We ask that visitors do not disturb teachers or children in instructional situations. Discussions with teachers and parent/teacher conferences should be scheduled in advance.

Please know that we welcome parents/guardians in our school. It is because of our concern for the safety of your children and the integrity of our instructional program that these security procedures have been implemented.

---

### SCHOOL HOURS

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Regular School Hours<br>8:42 am to 3:12 pm | Delayed Opening Hours<br>10:42 am to 3:12 pm | Single Session Hours<br>8:42 am to 1:20 pm |
|--|--|--|

*Unless enrolled in the YMCA before-school program, children may not be dropped off at Betsy Ross any sooner than 8:20 A.M.*

---

### Single Session Days:

Occasional "half days," called single session days, are scheduled throughout the school year. Single session days for the 2022-23 school year are as follows:

|                               |                    |                            |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Monday Tuesday, and Wednesday | November 3, 4, & 5 | Parent/Teacher Conferences |
| Wednesday                     | November 26        | Day before Thanksgiving    |
| Friday                        | December 23        | Day before Winter recess   |
| Friday                        | March 13           | Staff Development (PM)     |
| Thursday                      | June 4             | Family Night               |
| Wednesday and Thursday        | June 24 & 25       | Last Two Days of School    |

***NOTE: Lunch WILL be available on single session days, except on the last day of school, June 25, 2026. Please refer to the monthly lunch menu.***

---

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

To maximize student safety during arrival and dismissal, children are to be dropped off and picked up on Malcolm Road at the top of the steps. *Unless your child is signed up for the YMCA before-care, students cannot be dropped off before 8:20 AM*, as there is no supervision at that time. Driving into the parking lot in front of the school for drop off or pick up is prohibited. This area is reserved only for buses during these times.

Students arriving late (after 8:42 AM) must report to the office and be signed in by a parent/guardian before proceeding to their classrooms.

At dismissal, car riders will line up outside the library and proceed to the top of the stairs on Malcolm Road. U-turns and double parking are prohibited on Malcolm Road.

---

## DISMISSAL PLANS

Each summer, parents are asked to log into Pick Up Patrol to specify how the student will be dismissed each day (bus, car pick up, YMCA aftercare, etc). These procedures are in effect for the entire school year (Mahwah BOE *Pupil Supervision After School Policy* 8601). Daily changes should also be made on the Pick Up Patrol App. You will only be able to make daily changes until 2:40 p.m. After this time, you must call the office with the change **and** provide an email if a person other than the parent is picking up your child. For safety/security reasons, parents/guardians are asked not to enter the school at dismissal time.

---

## DISMISSAL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Since the time spent in school is important to student success, we encourage parents/guardians to make routine medical and dental check-ups for their children outside of school hours.

When a student needs to be released from school early, please use Pick Up Patrol to log the early dismissal. The parent must come to the main entrance, and the student will be called to the greeter's desk upon the parent's arrival.

***Except in the case of a rare emergency, parents are strongly discouraged from signing children out of school between 2:55 and 3:12 P.M., as our office staff is very busy at that time, ensuring a safe dismissal for all.***

---

## BUS REGULATIONS

School staff will discuss rules for proper bus behavior with students. Parents are asked to reinforce these rules by periodically discussing them with their children. In the interest of both safety and good citizenship, students are expected to adhere to the following bus guidelines as per Board of Education Regulation #5600:

- Leave home early enough to arrive at the bus stop on time. Allow 10 minutes. Walk in a safe manner.
- Wait for the bus in a safe place – well off the roadway.
- Enter the bus in an orderly manner, take a seat, and put the seat belt on.
- Follow the instructions of the school bus driver.
- Remain in your seat while the bus is in motion. Do not stand up while the bus is in motion.
- Keep aisles clear at all times.
- Remain quiet and orderly.
- Be courteous to the school bus driver and fellow passengers.
- Be alert to traffic when leaving the bus.
- Always be considerate of other people's property. Stay off people's lawns.
- Never put any body part outside the bus window, nor throw anything out the window.

Students who cause disturbances while riding buses to/from school will be subject to the following procedures:

- 1.) A **first offense** will result in a conference with the student, appropriate disciplinary action, and notification to his/her parent or guardian.
- 2.) A **second offense** will result in the student being prohibited from taking the bus for a minimum of one day and a conference with the student, his/her parent or guardian, and the principal.
- 3.) A **third offense** will result in the student not being permitted to travel on the bus for a week and possibly for the remainder of the school year.

*\*\*Steps 1 – 3 may be waived if the situation is sufficiently serious\*\**

**Any form of Harassment, Intimidation and/or Bullying will not be tolerated on a school bus. Please be aware that any reported incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying on a bus will be investigated as per New Jersey law. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for confirmed instances will be in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1**

Riding the bus is a *privilege*, not a right. While buses are in operation, the bus drivers have the same authority as teachers, including the assignment of seats, supervision of conduct, and the reporting of unsafe behavior to the principal's office. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact the Principal.

---

## BUS ASSIGNMENTS

All K-5 students will receive transportation to and from school. All transportation issues, including bus assignments, bus stops, bus routes, and bus drivers, are handled directly by the district's Transportation Director, Tracy Spindler, who can be reached at 201-762-2407 or by email: [tspindler@mahwah.k12.nj.us](mailto:tspindler@mahwah.k12.nj.us)

## LUNCH/RECESS

|                     | Lunch       | Recess      |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Kindergarten</b> | 12:00-12:30 | 12:30- 1:00 |
| <b>Grade 1</b>      | 12:00-12:30 | 12:30- 1:00 |
| <b>Grade 2</b>      | 12:30- 1:00 | 12:00-12:30 |
| <b>Grade 3</b>      | 12:30- 1:00 | 12:00-12:30 |

*A hot or cold lunch is available for students in Grades K-3. Students may bring their lunch in a bag or lunchbox labeled with their name.*

**Menus of lunches to be served are available on the Mahwah Schools website.**

The lunch/recess period lasts for one hour each day, with 30 minutes for lunch in the All-Purpose Room and 30 minutes for recess. Weather permitting, students participate in supervised play on the playground. During inclement weather, they stay indoors for supervised activity in classrooms. When necessary, children with written permission may go home for lunch.

---

## SCHOOL NUTRITION

Studies have shown that poor diet combined with a lack of exercise negatively impacts children's health and their ability and motivation to learn. In response to these concerns and federal and state mandates regarding child and adolescent school nutrition, the Mahwah Board of Education adopted a School Nutrition policy (see excerpt below). *We ask that parents and guardians follow these guidelines when sending in food meant for group consumption (birthday treats, holiday parties, etc.). Food brought in that does not follow the guidelines will not be served.*

**Important:** Additionally, because of the large number of our students with nut allergies, it is important that **food sent in for the whole class DOES NOT contain nuts or nut butters/oils.**

### ***Mahwah Board Policy #8505***

*The Board is committed to: providing pupils with healthy and nutritious foods; encouraging the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk, and whole grains; supporting healthy eating through nutrition education; encouraging pupils to select and consume all components of the school meal; and providing pupils with the opportunity to engage in daily physical activity.*

*The following items may not be served, sold, or given out as free promotion anywhere on school property at any time before the end of the school day:*

- 1. Foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV) as defined by U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations;*
  - 2. All food and beverage items listing sugar, in any form, as the first ingredient; and*
  - 3. All forms of candy.*
-

## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays are very special days in the lives of young children. Students may bring in treats to share with the class to celebrate their birthdays (see nutrition guidelines, above). We ask that treats be kept manageable for the classroom teacher (e.g., individual servings rather than something that needs to be cut, juice boxes rather than bottles and cups). For more information on healthy birthday treats, please visit: <http://www.snacksafely.com>

Invitations to private birthday parties may only be distributed in school if the following guidelines are followed:

- The ENTIRE class is invited, or
- ALL the boys are invited, or
- ALL the girls are invited.

For reasons of privacy, unless parents have signed their permission on the “Birthday Party/Play Date List” shared at Back to School Night, our school staff is authorized to disclose only students’ first names to parents requesting names for party invitations.

---

## SCHOOL CLOSING/DELAYED OPENING INFORMATION

When weather conditions prevent us from opening school at the regular time, the following procedure will be put into effect:

- 1.) Announcement of the closing or two-hour delayed opening will be made through the *One Call Now* automated calling system, and our district website: [www.mahwah.k12.nj.us](http://www.mahwah.k12.nj.us)
- 2.) The school will begin notifying families by 6:30 A.M. via the computerized telephone calling system, *One Call Now*. The system will call the emergency numbers supplied by the student’s parent/guardian. Families may opt out of receiving this early call by informing the office. However, if the school needs to alert families of an emergency early closing or other emergency, everyone will be notified via *One Call Now*.
- 3.) When weather conditions prohibit the school from opening at the regular time, a delayed opening will be implemented. A delayed opening means that the regular school opening will be delayed for 2 hours. All classes will be dismissed at the regular time. On a delayed opening day, school begins at 10:42 AM. *No child may be dropped off before 10:20 A.M., as there is no supervision before that time.* Lunch will be served, though the menu may change on such days.
- 4.) On a delayed opening day, bus students should report to their assigned stop two hours later than usual. Please be patient at the bus stop, as road conditions may affect the pick-up schedule.
- 5.) **There is no YMCA before-school program on delayed opening days.** If Betsy Ross closes early because of inclement weather, **all after-school activities, including the YMCA aftercare program, are canceled.**
- 6.) Please do not call the local police to ask about school closings or delayed openings.

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year. The discussion focuses on the skills the student demonstrates at that point in time. Conferences are held in November and April.

Conference period 1: November 3 - 5

Conference period 2: March 16 - 19

## **PROGRESS REPORT DATES**

Written progress reports that reflect developmentally appropriate skills are issued twice a year for kindergarten and three times a year for students in grades one through three.

### **Kindergarten:**

Reporting Interval #1                      January 30, 2026

Reporting Interval #2                      June 25, 2026

### **Elementary:**

Reporting Interval #1                      November 26, 2025

Reporting Interval #2                      March 6, 2026

Reporting Interval #3                      June 25, 2026

---

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is a necessary part of each pupil's educational program. Some assignments are long-range in nature and require planned study time for their completion. Homework may involve written work, study, research, or some form of individual or group activity. Homework is an integral part of the curriculum. Parents with questions about homework should contact their child's teacher.

---

## **ATTENDANCE**

Good attendance and punctuality are necessary for academic achievement. By New Jersey State Law (Title 18A), students must be in regular attendance during the days that the public schools are in session. Moreover, young children feel more comfortable in school when they arrive on time and attend regularly.

If your child is ill, however, he/she should remain at home.

Please keep your child home if the following symptoms are evident: fever, runny nose, cough, swollen glands, rash, nausea, cramps, diarrhea, vomiting, headache, listlessness, and/or pink or inflamed eyes.

**Children are required to be fever-free for at least 24 hours following an illness before returning to school.**

**Parents/guardians must call the school nurse (201-762-2253) by 9 AM to report their child's absence, stating the child's NAME, DATE, and REASON for the absence.** Parents can call any time (even the night before) and leave a message.

Absence for five days or longer requires a doctor's note upon return to school. Please consult the school nurse if you have any questions regarding this policy.

Students who are absent from school cannot participate in or attend extracurricular activities after school or in the evening on the day they were absent.

As per Board of Education Policy 5200 only state-recognized religious holidays, a death in the family, medically excused (with doctor's note) absences, involvement in a comparable program out of school, and those absences identified in regulations will be officially excused. All other absences, though requiring a note upon the child's return to school, will be unexcused. Board policy requires that when a student's unexcused absences reach 10, 15, or 20, a series of graduated responses will occur, such as a letter of concern, a mandatory meeting with school officials, and mandatory action by the principal.

---

## HOME INSTRUCTION FOR EXTENDED ILLNESS

When serious illness or injury requires that a child be absent from school for more than 10 consecutive days, the services of a home tutor may be supplied. Please contact the Main Office for information.

---

## HEALTH SERVICES

The school health program has been designed to improve, protect, and promote the health of our students. Please be sure to inform Mrs. Blackford, our nurse, of any allergies, communicable diseases, or significant medical conditions.

In addition to routine care of our students, the school nurse conducts the following routine screenings:

1. Students are measured and weighed yearly.
2. Students are given a hearing screening and a vision screening.

All new students are required to have a physical examination prior to entrance to school. Please forward this information to the school health office.

If you have questions pertaining to the health program, please call our nurse (201-762-2253). Our nurse is available 9 AM – 3 PM daily.

---

## ILLNESSES AND INJURIES AT SCHOOL

All students who become ill or are injured at school are seen in the health office. If the situation warrants, parents will be contacted about the situation and any concerns for further care. If the nurse determines that a child is too ill to remain in school, the parent or his/her designee will be asked to pick up the child in a timely fashion.

---

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT CARD**

This PINK card is distributed each September to all families. It must be completed in full (back and front) and returned during the first week of school. This card is essential if a child is injured or becomes ill at school, as we need to know who to contact if you are not available.

*The school nurse must be notified immediately if there are any phone numbers or emergency contact changes during the school year. Parents are also encouraged to check/update contact information on the district's Realtime Parent Portal.*

## **SCHOOL INSURANCE**

Students will have coverage while in school at no cost to parents. Parents may pay for 24-hour coverage by completing the appropriate forms.

---

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION EXCUSE**

Physical Education is a state-mandated class. A written note must be provided for a student to be excused from physical education class and must be for health reasons only. A physician's note is required for any extended period of time (more than 2 days). Students who are excused from P.E. for medical reasons will spend recess indoors, involved in a supervised quiet activity.

---

## **INDOORS AT RECESS (FOR HEALTH REASONS)**

Written requests to the nurse for children to stay indoors during lunch and recess must be for health reasons only. Requests for more than two days should be accompanied by a doctor's note.

---

## **TARDINESS DUE TO MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

If a student is tardy because of a dentist or doctor's appointment, a note must be sent the previous day, and a note is also required from a parent when the child returns to school.

---

## **STUDENT MEDICATION - K-12**

The district policy (#5330) concerning the administration of medication to students reads, in part, as follows:

*The administration of prescribed medication to a student during school hours will be permitted only when failure to take such medicine would jeopardize the health of the student or the student would not be able to attend school if the medicine were not made available to him/her during school hours. For purposes of this policy, "medication" shall include all medicines prescribed by a physician.*

In order to comply with this policy, we ask you to follow these steps:

- 1.) Try to schedule the medication so that it can be given before the child leaves for school and/or after the child returns home.

2.) If your doctor requests that a medication be given in school, please note:

- a.) The medicine in its original container should be brought to the school by a responsible adult. If the child must also receive this medication at home, you may ask your pharmacist to split the medication into two separately labeled containers. One container may be brought to school and one left at home.
- b.) You must have written permission for the medication to be administered by the nurse. The nurse or parent/guardian is the only person permitted to administer medications in the schools (ruled on by the Commissioner of Education in September 1981). When the nurse is not available, you will be notified and will have the option of coming to school to administer the medicine yourself. If your child needs to use an inhaler, he/she may now carry it if the proper form is on file in the health office. This form may be obtained from the nurse.
- c.) You must also send to the school a written order of the prescribing physician, including the dosage, the time at which the medication should be administered, the length of time for which the medication is prescribed, and the possible side effects of the medication. These orders are to be renewed **yearly**. Forms are available from the nurse.
- d.) In addition, please note that the school nurse cannot administer over-the-counter drugs, such as Tylenol, cough medicine, decongestant tablets, antacids, and cough lozenges, unless written under a doctor's prescription.

Please ***DO NOT*** give any child medication to take or carry him/herself. We ask you to please follow these steps for the safety of your child and other children. The medication could fall into the wrong hands. This policy applies to all school-sponsored activities.

---

## PERSONAL AND SCHOOL PROPERTY

Electronic devices (any cellular enabled device such as cell phones, watches, iPads, gaming consoles, etc.), small toys, dolls, stuffed animals, toy guns, laser pointers, collectible cards (Pokemon cards, baseball cards, etc.), and items with non-educational merit **may not be brought to school by students at any time**. It is also forbidden to bring to school any item that would be hazardous to the health, safety, and well-being of school occupants. School authorities are required to report to the police department any incident involving incendiary or explosive devices or weapons.

Each student is responsible for his/her personal property while in school, and care needs to be exercised to ensure the minimum possibility of loss. Students are also responsible for textbooks and other materials issued to them.

Any school property lost or damaged by a pupil must be paid for by the parent/guardian. This will include textbooks given to children by their classroom teacher at the beginning of the school year and library books. Should any book be returned after the fine is paid, the money will be returned.

---

## DRESS CODE

**Appropriate Clothing:** Students should always be dressed in proper clothing and attire at school, with safety at the forefront. In particular, backless shoes (such as “Crocs,” clogs, or flip-flops), platform shoes, and “wheeler” sneakers pose a safety risk and should not be worn. In addition, excessively short clothing is inappropriate, as are pants that drag along the floor. Any clothing that depicts acts of violence or contains suggestive or offensive comments is unacceptable. We ask that you not send your child to school in these types of clothing.

**Physical Education Attire:** Students should dress comfortably for physical education class. Loose-fitting clothing is important for the wide range of movement activities that are covered. A good athletic sneaker is the best for physical activity and for children’s safety. No shoes, sandals, or platform sneakers will be permitted during physical education.

## PLAYGROUND AND CAFETERIA

We work all year with our students to develop good manners, empathy, and appropriate behavior not only in the classroom, but also in the hallways, playground, buses, and cafeteria. We ask that you reinforce these positive messages at home by explaining how important these values are in a school setting.

Cafeteria manners should be the same as those practiced at home: using a soft, “inside” voice while talking, being respectful to adults and peers, and cleaning up after oneself. We teach children to communicate with their words and not with their hands. Helping children talk out problems and resolve conflicts without becoming physical is one of the best things that school staff and parents can do.

Since serious accidents can result when large groups are assembled on the playground, it is necessary to set up certain rules and regulations. Therefore, the following activities/actions are prohibited on the playground:

- Hardball, tackle football, and any other potentially dangerous games
- Throwing of any hazardous objects (e.g., rocks, sticks, snowballs)
- Playing in the parking lot areas
- Digging holes
- Fighting, spitting, or using abusive language
- Eating or chewing gum

---

## LOST ARTICLES

The Lost and Found is located in the All-Purpose Room. If your child is missing something, please feel free to look in the Lost and Found. Small items of value are usually kept in the Main Office until claimed. Labeling your child’s belongings will better help school personnel find the owner.

---

## FIRE AND SAFETY DRILLS

In compliance with New Jersey statute, Betsy Ross School will administer at least one fire drill and one security drill each month within the school hours.

---

## **INTERNET ACCESS**

Betsy Ross School has access to the Internet, which allows students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and various other electronic resources. Betsy Ross School strongly believes that this valuable information and the skills needed to obtain it are an important part of a student's education.

Access to the Internet is a *privilege*, not a right. Students will be responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. Access to network services will be provided to students who follow the guidelines set by the school and their teachers and whose parents indicate permission (via the Realtime Parent Portal) for their child to use the computer/network in compliance with district policy.

## **PLACEMENT IN THE NEXT GRADE**

Betsy Ross staff takes many factors into consideration when placing students into the next grade. We welcome parent information about children (student learning styles, emotional needs, etc.), but we do not accept requests for specific teachers.

---

## **REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION**

Students who perform below a minimum standard of proficiency in reading and/or mathematics may be eligible for remedial instruction by a certified specialist. Students may enter or exit the program at any time during the year. Pre- and post-tests are utilized to determine student progress. Parents are notified of placement in a remedial program.

---

## **INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SERVICES (I&RS)**

When concerns arise about a student's academic or social progress, an I&RS meeting may be scheduled. The I&RS committee, consisting of the Principal, Social Worker, and Teacher, meets with a student's parents/guardians to discuss progress and develop a plan of action, if necessary. The purpose of I&RS is to provide assistance within the regular education setting. If, after many interventions, it is felt that the child may need more assistance, the child may be referred to the Child Study Team. The Child Study Team reviews previous interventions and may suggest further interventions and/or make the decision to evaluate the child.

---

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

Parents are advised that they may arrange to review records pertaining to their children by submitting a written request to the school principal. Records of students who have been evaluated by the District Child Study Team may be reviewed at the office of the Director of Special Education at the Administrative Offices behind Mahwah High School campus. The rights of parents regarding access to pupil records are outlined in N.J.A.C. 6:33-2.1 through 2.8, copies of which are available upon request from the Director's office. The telephone number of the Child Study Team is 201-762-2281.

---

## **CHILD FIND**

*Child Find* activities result in the location, identification, and evaluation of children, ages three through twenty-one, who reside within the school district or attend nonpublic schools within the school district and who may be disabled. If you have concerns regarding your child's development or learning and believe he/she may have a disability, please contact our district's Child Study Team. The Child Study Team can be reached via phone at 201-762-2281.

---

## **STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The Mahwah Public School District prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, etc) should contact the Office of Special Education.

---

## **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

It is the policy of the Mahwah School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, handicap, ancestry, national origin, social or economic status, or marital status, in its educational programs or activities and employment policies as required by Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, N.J.A.C. 6:4-1.1 et.seq. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Inquiries regarding compliance may be directed to Mr. Dennis Fare, Affirmative Action Officer, at 201-762-2406, or to the principal at 201-762-2251.

---

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY NO. 5751**

The Board of Education explicitly forbids any conduct or expression that may be construed as the sexual harassment of a pupil by an employee of the district or by another pupil.

The sexual harassment of a pupil includes all unwelcome sexual advances or suggestions, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical contacts of a sexual nature whenever such conduct has the purpose or effect of intimidation or tends to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

The Superintendent shall direct the instruction of all pupils of their right to be free of sexual harassment and innuendo and shall encourage pupils to report any incident of sexual harassment to any teaching staff member.

Any employee who receives such a report or who has independent cause to suspect that a pupil has been subjected to sexual harassment shall promptly notify the building principal, who shall immediately instigate an investigation of the matter and report his or her findings to the Superintendent. An act of sexual harassment that appears to constitute child abuse shall be immediately reported to the Division of Youth and Family Services for

investigation by that agency.

An employee who engages in the sexual harassment of a pupil will be subject to stringent discipline and may be terminated. A pupil who engages in the sexual harassment of another pupil will be subject to discipline in accordance with Policy No. 5600.

---

## **HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY NO. 5512**

Betsy Ross School has a commitment to keep students safe and will not tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Parents of students being harassed, intimidated, or bullied should contact the school administration immediately. The district's harassment, intimidation, and bullying policy is listed below. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

### **Policy Statement**

The Board of Education prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a pupil. A safe and civil environment in the school is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a pupil's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its pupils in a safe and disciplined environment. Since pupils learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

“Harassment, intimidation, or bullying” means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, as defined in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents that:

- 1.) is reasonably perceived as being motivated by either any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical, or sensory disability; or
  - 2.) by any other distinguishing characteristic, and that
  - 3.) takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds, as provided for in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15.3, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other pupils; and that
  - 4.) a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a pupil or damaging the pupil's property, or placing a pupil in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
  - 5.) has the effect of insulting or demeaning any pupil or group of pupils; or
6. creates a hostile educational environment for the pupil by interfering with a pupil's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the pupil.

“Electronic communication” means communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to: a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.

---

## **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

Federal FERPA laws give parents/guardians the right to:

- Inspect and review their child's education records;
- Seek to amend the student's education records if they believe they are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of privacy rights;
- Give consent before personally identifiable information in the records is disclosed, except to the extent that FERPA and its regulations authorize the disclosure without consent;
- File a complaint with the DOE concerning alleged violations of FERPA or its regulations.
- Mahwah BOE policy 8330 includes procedures for reviewing or amending student records.