

KNICKERBOCKER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“Where Students are Respectful, Responsible, and Safe”



STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK AND CODE OF CONDUCT 2025 - 2026

Knickerbocker Elementary School Creed

Written by the students of Knickerbocker

I am respectful.
I am responsible and safe.

I am here to learn.
Therefore,
I will do nothing to keep the teacher from teaching,
or anyone from learning, including myself.

Everyday I will be honest, trustworthy, caring, and kind.

I will work hard and not give up.
And will treat people respectfully,
The way I want to be treated.



TERRANCE L. GONSETH
Interim Principal

PAIGE M. D. CHRISLEY
Building Secretary



WATERTOWN
CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Our Children, Our Future!

KNICKERBOCKER ELEMENTARY

Terrance L. Gonseth
Interim Principal

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to another exciting year at Knickerbocker School!

In order to help you and your child, the following handbook has been compiled with information about our school. This handbook consists of various policies and procedures at Knickerbocker. If you have any questions concerning the enclosed information, please feel free to call the school office at 315-785-3740.

Knickerbocker School is fortunate to have a very dedicated, caring faculty and staff. Their main concern is the education of your child. Parent support and communication are extremely important to the success of our students and we encourage you to be an active participant in your children's education.

We hope your child has an exciting and successful educational experience here at Knickerbocker School. We look forward to a wonderful school year with you and your student.

Thank you for sharing your child with us!

Sincerely,

Terrance L. Gonseth
Interim Principal

Watertown City School District is committed to building a caring culture that
fosters lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

739 Knickerbocker Drive WATERTOWN, NY 13601-4593 |

☎ 315.785.3740 | 🖨 315-779-5654

Knickerbocker Elementary School

Student/Parent Handbook

School Hours: 8:00 am - Morning bell / Students Enter / Breakfast
8:20 am - Attendance Taken
8:20 am - Doors are Locked
2:40 pm - Cut off for Early Dismissal
2:55 pm - Walkers Dismissed / Grades 2, 3, & 4 Parent Pick-Up (Door #7)
/ 4H Students Dismissed to Cafeteria
3:00 pm - Grades K-1 Parent Pick-Up (Door #1)
3:00 pm - Bussers Dismissed

Important Phone Numbers:

Main Office/Attendance - (315) 785 - 3741

Health Office - (315) 785 - 3743

General Procedures

Arrival

- Students may not enter the building before **8:00 AM**.
- Follow posted speed limits (10 MPH) and use only the school-side of the street for drop-offs.
- Use the Drop-and-Go zone (between orange cones). Parents must remain in their vehicles.
- **Do not use the parking lot or driveway** for student drop-off; these areas are for buses only.

Dismissal

- **2:55 PM:** Walkers, Grades 2–4 parent pick-up (Door #7)
- **2:55 PM:** 4H/SACC dismissed (cafeteria)
- **3:00 PM:** Grades K–1 parent pick-up (Door #1)
- **3:00 PM:** Bus dismissal

Note: Students will only be released to adults listed on the approved contact list. Written permission and a valid photo ID are required for anyone else.

Early Dismissal (Before 2:40 PM)




- Send a written note with your child's name, pickup time, and reason.
- Parents must sign out at the main entrance. Students will be called to the office. Please do not attempt to enter the building.
- No student will be released directly from the classroom.

After 2:40 PM, parents will be directed to their designated dismissal exit to pick up their children for regular dismissal.

Medications

- A written request from **both** a physician and a parent is required.
- Medications must be delivered by a parent/adult in the original container.
- Contact the nurse at (315) 785-3743 for more details.

Attendance

- Students not in class by **8:20 AM** are marked tardy.
- Notify the school of absences before **9:00 AM**
 -  Call: (315) 785-3741
 -  Email: pchrissley@watertowncsd.org
 -  ParentSquare: Message Paige Chrissley
- Written excuses must be submitted upon return to avoid unexcused absences. ParentSquare excuses must be submitted within 24 hours.
- If arriving late, parents must sign their child in using the sheet located at the main entrance.
- Students should then report to the office **on their own** to receive a welcome slip.

Babysitters

Submit a written note to your child's teacher if your child will be going to a babysitter after school. Update this note as needed with your child's classroom teacher and the school secretary.

Bicycles, Scooters, Skateboards

- We encourage students riding bikes, scooters and skateboards to school.
- Walk bikes, scooters and skateboards onto school grounds.
- Bikes should be locked in the rack; scooters folded; skateboards carried.
- Helmets are required under NYS law.
- Bike racks are located at the front of the school.

Meals

- All students receive free breakfast and lunch.
- A la carte items require funds in the student's account (pay at myschoolbucks.com).
- Students may bring a home lunch and purchase milk. Milk cannot be charged.
- We do not have the capacity to heat or prepare home-packed food.

Bus Behavior

Students must follow safety rules:

- Stay seated
- Follow driver instructions
- Keep hands/feet to self
- Use respectful language

Riding the bus is a privilege, not a right. Students are expected to obey the rules posted on the bus and treat the driver and other riders with respect. If a student breaks the rules, he/she will be issued a bus infraction by the driver. This notice is brought to the principal and acted on accordingly. If the child is suspended from riding the bus, please be aware that it is the responsibility of the parent to transport the child to and from school. A child needs to be in attendance for a bus suspension to be counted. Keeping a child home will not be counted as an absence.

Disciplinary Steps:

1. Verbal warning
2. In-school consequence
3. 2-day suspension
4. 5-day suspension
5. 20-day suspension + parent/principal/transportation meeting

Reminder: *It is illegal to pass a school bus with flashing lights in New York State. *This includes buses in school driveways.**

Safety & Emergency Procedures

School Closings

During our long winter month, we often have various weather changes. In the event of a school closing, delayed opening, or early dismissal, information will be given over the following radio and television stations and Websites:

<u>Radio</u>	<u>Television</u>	<u>Websites</u>
● WTNY 790 AM	WWNY TV7	www.newzjunkie.com
● WATN 1240 AM	WWTI TV50	www.watertowncsd.org
● WCIZ 93.5 FM	TV 3 Syracuse	www.watertowndailytimes.com
● WTOJ 103.7 FM		ParentSquare

Emergency Closing Plan

- Families must submit an early emergency dismissal plan each fall.
- Notify the school of changes throughout the year.

Excused Absences

- New York State law requires a written excuse for every absence from school.
- If a written excuse or ParentSquare message is not received, the absence will be recorded as unexcused in the student's attendance record.
- Even if you called the school to report your child's absence, a written excuse or ParentSquare message signed by a parent or legal guardian is still required for official documentation.


Fire Drills & Lockdowns

- 8 fire drills and several lockdown drills are conducted yearly.
- Students must follow instructions and exit calmly.
- Fire prevention education is provided to students in the fall by the Watertown Fire Dept.

Lockdown Drills

- Lockdown drills are conducted periodically throughout the school year to ensure the safety and preparedness of students and staff.
- These drills are designed to practice our school's response in the event of an intruder or unsafe situation within or near the building.
- Pre-established safety plans are in place and followed by both teachers and students during each drill.
- The goal is to help students feel prepared, not fearful, and to ensure everyone knows what to do in an emergency situation.

Health Concerns

- Notify the school nurse if your child will be absent for an extended time or has a communicable disease.
 - **Ms. Lynne Rigabar, Registered Nurse**
 -  Call the school at (315) 785-3743
- Sick students should stay home to prevent spreading illness.

Please be sure the school has an emergency phone number in case your child becomes sick at school.

Home–School Coordinator’s Attendance Improvement Program

- This program is designed to monitor student attendance and support families whose children have a high rate of absenteeism.
- The Home–School Coordinator works closely with students and families to improve attendance through:
 - Individual student check-ins
 - Phone calls and home visits
- The goal is to partner with families to identify barriers and offer meaningful solutions that support consistent school attendance.
- If you have questions or need assistance with your child’s attendance, please contact:
Ms. Eboni Combs, Home–School Coordinator

Immunizations & Physicals

- NYS law requires all students to be up-to-date on immunizations.
- Physicals required for new students and Grades K, 2, and 4.

Internet-Enabled Device Policy - New Board Policy #7208

Students are prohibited from using internet-enabled devices on school grounds during the school day, including Bluetooth headphones or earbuds, except as expressly permitted under the limited exceptions outlined in the policy. Any students and families choosing to bring such devices to school do so at their own risk, and by doing so, release the District from any liability associated with those devices.

Storage Requirements - Students will be required to store ALL internet-enabled devices (including, but not limited to, phones, tablets, watches, headphones/earbuds, rings) in a lockable storage container within their classroom.

Communication and Contact - Students will be able to contact parents by phone in the main office, if needed.

Exceptions:

- Health and Safety - may be permitted when necessary for managing a documented medical condition or healthcare need, as authorized by a licensed healthcare provider and approved by school administration (i.e. diabetic sensor).
- Language - may be permitted when necessary to support a student's documented English Language development needs, such as real-time translation service.
- 504/IRP Plans - when use is required as part of a student's Section 504 Plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Enforcement - students who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the District's Code of Conduct and applicable law. Consequences may include progressive discipline or restorative practices. Suspension of a student shall not be permitted if the sole grounds for the suspension is that the student accessed an internet-enabled device in violation of this policy.

Academics & Communication

Parent/Teacher Conferences

- December 11 & 12, 2025
- March 13, 2026
- Additional meetings may be requested as needed.

Report Cards

- Issued three times per year.
- Parents must sign and return report card envelopes after the first two periods.

Six-Day Rotation

- Includes PE, Art, Music, Library.
- Three PE classes per cycle, plus one art, music, and library class per cycle.
- Double specials of art or music occur once per cycle. (Additional 20 weeks of each)
- Your child's classroom teacher will notify you of the special schedule. Snow dates and vacations are not counted.

Sneakers required for PE; smocks or an old t-shirt are recommended for Art.

Photo/Media Release

- A form is sent home each fall.
- Parents must provide consent for their child to be included in press/media coverage.
- Should a field trip or activity in school or on school grounds receive press/media coverage, parents would give/deny consent for their child to be taped or have his/her picture taken and possibly shown on public television, printed in the newspaper, or displayed on the Watertown City School District web page.

Additional Information

After-School Care Programs

- **SACC (YMCA):** (315) 755-2005
 - **Before** school care program at Knickerbocker
- **4H (Cornell Cooperative Extension):** (315) 788-8450
 - **After** school care program at Knickerbocker

Recess

- Held daily when weather permits.
- Playground use is restricted during winter.
- Students must dress appropriately for outdoor play.

Personal Items

- Valuables and toys should not be brought to school unless needed for class.
 - Teachers would reach out to relay if your child is able to bring a toy to school or if money is needed. The teacher would need to lock these items up in the classroom.
- The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Visitors

- All visitors must check in at the main office.
- After 8:20 AM, doors are locked—use the intercom to speak with office staff.
- To reach the main office please press the doorbell by the door and state why you are here.
- Please do not attempt to enter the building unless instructed to do so. Your cooperation with this is expected.

The Watertown City School District hereby advises students, parents, employees, and the general public that it offers employment and educational opportunities without regard to sex, race, color, national origin, creed or religion, marital status, age, gender preference, or disability. Inquiries regarding this non-discrimination policy may be directed to: Coordinator Title IZ, Section 504 @ 1351 Washington St.; P.O. BOX 586; Watertown, NY 13601-0586; 315-785-3714.