



# Bee In the Know...

*Yellow Jacket Back to School Guide  
Farragut Middle School*

*A new school year means fresh beginnings, new opportunities, and endless possibilities for your child's success. To help you and your student start strong, we've put together our Back to School Guide—packed with tips, resources, and strategies to make the transition smooth and the year ahead truly rewarding.*

## **2025 - 2026 BELL SCHEDULE UPDATES - [Click here](#)**

**NEW this year:** All students in grades 5 through 8 will participate in a nine period school day with formal instruction beginning at **8:15AM** but now ending at **2:54 p.m.** This schedule will be explained to your child on the first day of school. However, each day, students will then have a shorter but valuable **Academic Coaching period (2:54–3:15 p.m.)** where teachers are available for help, make-up work, test review, or catching up after an absence. Since this window is brief, students should hustle if they want to connect with their teachers! We kindly ask that parents schedule appointments **after 3:15 p.m.** so students can make the most of this dedicated time.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Being present and on-time for school is one of the key indicators of student success. It is critical that students attend school on-time, every day school is in session, unless they are sick. The first period begins at 8:15am. Early arrivals may go to the cafeteria, which opens at 7:30am. Breakfast is served daily in the cafeteria. If your child is going to be absent or late to school, please call the Attendance Office at 914-478-6223 or email at [fmsattendance@hohschools.org](mailto:fmsattendance@hohschools.org).

## **CALENDAR INFORMATION**

The school year is a busy time for all members of the school community! Please note that printed calendars are often out-of-date quickly. For the most up-to-date calendar of events, please visit the FMS website.

- ❖ [Click here](#) to access the District Calendar
- ❖ [Click here](#) to access the Letter Day Schedule for FMS

## **CHROMEBOOKS**

Under the new Distraction Free Schools' policy, Students will no longer be permitted to bring **personal internet-enabled devices** from home. Instead, each student will be issued a **district Chromebook** for instructional use during the school year. Students in **grade 5** will use Chromebooks stored in their classrooms, while students in **grades 6–8** will be assigned their own Chromebook to use throughout the year. Please note that **Chromebooks are not allowed at lunch or recess.** Let's get outside and PLAY!

## **COMMUNICATION**

Open lines of communication between families and the school are a critical component in supporting student success. Please use the District's [Whom To Contact chart](#) to determine the best person to reach out to in the Hastings School District with questions, concerns, etc.

## **DISTRACTION-FREE SCHOOLS POLICY (INTERNET-ENABLED DEVICES)**

Dr. McKersie, in a [community update sent to HOH Families and Staff on July 22](#), , outlined the district's plan for limiting the use of smartphones and other internet-enabled devices during the

school day for all K–12 students. Under this new policy, developed in adherence with NYS law, students will not be permitted to use personal internet-enabled devices (phones, smartwatches, tablets, laptops, etc.) during the school day. To support this, every student will be assigned a **personal locking pouch with a magnetic lock** to store their device.

### What Are the Locking Pouches?

- Each student receives a personal pouch, reused daily, to secure their device.
- Devices must be locked every morning upon arrival and unlocked only at the end of the day.
- Pouches must remain in the student’s backpack and stored in their locker during the school day.
- If a student forgets their pouch, their device will be kept in the **main office** and returned after school.

### Where Are the Locking/Unlocking Stations?

- **Morning Check-In:** Students show locked pouches to staff at entrances.
- **Afternoon Exit:** Unlocking stations will be available at the HS & MS Main Entrances/Exits, Guidance Office (*emergencies only*), Athletics Office, Nurse’s Office (*emergencies only*), and Security Desk. In addition, a roving staff member will carry an unlocking device to support students.

### How Can I Contact My Child?

- **Non-Emergencies:** Please call or email the **main office** for non-urgent matters. To protect learning time, interruptions should be minimal.
- **Emergencies:** Call the **main office** directly at 914-478-6230.. Unless otherwise directed, staff will bring the student to the office.

### Additional Information:

- Students who have not yet received their **agenda, lock, or pouch** will receive these items on the **first day of school**.
- FMS will be in **full compliance by Wednesday, September 3**.
- Students and parents should carefully review the **FAQ**, [LINKED HERE](#), for guidance on violations, lost or damaged pouches, and non-compliance procedures.

### DRIVING AND TRAFFIC

If you are driving your child to school, please note that the only way to enter the drop off zone in front of the Middle School is by making a right hand turn from Mt. Hope Boulevard into the front driveway. Turns are **not allowed** from Farragut Avenue into the drop off zone. Also, **left turns are not permitted** at the end of the drop off zone in front of the school onto Farragut Avenue.

Another approach to the school is to turn onto Hillside Avenue and proceed to the **Hillside Avenue** drop off zone. This zone is located just past the crosswalk that leads to Reynold’s field on Hillside Avenue. Cars that stop right at the corner will block both the crosswalk and other cars. It is important to pull up to the drop off zone as far as possible to avoid blocking the corner.

### FACILITIES UPDATES

Please [click here](#) to read important information from our Facilities Department on asbestos inspections, pesticide use and fire inspections.

### FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEAL PROGRAM

Please [click here](#) ([Solicitud espanol](#)) for information regarding the Free or Reduced School Meal Programs. If applicable, please return the completed [form](#) ([carta espanol](#)) to Maureen Caraballo in the Business Office. If you have any questions regarding these programs, please call the Business Office directly at 914-478-6405. If you would like to join the online program to pay for your child’s lunch, you can log onto [www.mypaymentsplus.com](http://www.mypaymentsplus.com) to get the necessary information. Please have your child’s ID number available.

## **LOCKERS**

All students in Grades 6–8 will be assigned a locker and a lock at the beginning of the school year. The purpose of a locker is to provide students with a secure place to store their belongings. We encourage students to use their locker four times a day: at arrival, before lunch, after recess, and at dismissal.

To support students:

- All **first-period teachers** are aware of each student's locker number, location, and assigned combination.
- Forgot where your locker is or need help? Have no fear! **Mr. Waldeck, Ms. Iorio, the guidance team, and your teachers** are all available to assist.
- Please remind your child that they should **not share their locker or locker combination** with anyone else.

This school year, most students will be utilizing **hanging locks** for their locker, which will help eliminate some of the issues experienced in the past with built-in locks.

## **LUNCH PERIOD**

5th and 6th grade students will have lunch and recess during 6th period (11:55am - 12:37pm). 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will have lunch and recess during 7<sup>th</sup> period (12:40pm – 1:22pm). Each grade level will have 21 minutes to eat lunch and 21 minutes for recess. The students will rotate the order of lunch and recess on a monthly basis.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

There will be occasions when photos or video will be taken within the school to be used in district publications. Please complete the form linked below if you **DO NOT** want your child's image and/or name to appear in any public videos, newspaper articles, or publications, including the Farragut Middle School website. [Click here](#) to access the Media Opt-Out Form. Photos will be published in the Farragut Middle School yearbook unless specified otherwise.

## **PTSA INFORMATION**

The PTSA supports the students and staff of FMS in a multitude of ways throughout the school year. Considering joining! [Click here](#) to access the PTSA Membership Letter. [Click here](#) for PTSA Back To School Meet and Greet Letter.

Are you a newly registered family? Consider being partnered with another family through the PTSA Buddy Program who can help you navigate Hastings. [Click here](#) to read more about the PTSA Farragut Buddy Program.

## **SCHOOL COUNSELORS**

Farragut Middle School is committed to providing a rigorous academic program within a safe, supportive, and understanding learning community. The Counseling Department supports and encourages the academic, social and emotional growth of middle-level students during the transitional years between elementary and high school through the implementation of a Comprehensive Developmental School Counseling Program. 5th and 6th grade students will have Ms. DalCero as their school counselor. 7th and 8th grade students will have Ms. Perez as their school counselor. If you have any questions about your child's schedule, please call the Counseling Office at 914-478-6228.

## **SEPTA INFORMATION**

Hastings' SEPTA (the Special Education PTA) is another organization that supports the students and staff of FMS in a multitude of ways throughout the school year. Considering joining! [Click here](#) to access the SEPTA Membership Letter.

SEPTA continuously works hard to provide useful information to families of students with disabilities on how to prepare and support their children throughout the school year. [Click here](#) to review the SEPTA Back to School Checklist. Please also see SEPTA's new [4th to 5th Grade Transition Q&A](#) and their [5th to 6th Grade Transition Q&A](#).

### **TEAM COORDINATORS**

If you have any questions regarding trips or special events, please feel free to email your child's grade level Team Coordinator:

- ❖ **5th Grade** - Ms. Shannon Gray - [Grays@hohschools.org](mailto:Grays@hohschools.org).
- ❖ **6th Grade** - Ms. Barbara Richman - [Richmanb@hohschools.org](mailto:Richmanb@hohschools.org)
- ❖ **7th Grade** - Mr. Scott Shapiro - [Shapiros@hohschools.org](mailto:Shapiros@hohschools.org)
- ❖ **8th Grade** - Dr. Ken Cotrone - [Cotronek@hohschools.org](mailto:Cotronek@hohschools.org)