

**BEECHWOOD SCHOOL
STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR GRADES PreK-2**



**A GUIDE TO POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PROGRAMS
INCLUDING THE BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES
FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR**

**Mrs. Jessica Vierschilling
Beechwood School Principal**

Primary school educators are committed to pursuing and maintaining an academically excellent, developmentally responsive, and socially equitable learning environment for every student. We realize that parents/guardians are our partners in the educational process and the student handbook is meant to provide you and your child with information pertaining to academics, attendance, and conduct. We urge you to read and review this school document with your child so that your child’s primary school experience is wonderful.

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I. MOUNTAINSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT VISION

The vision is to ensure that children are society's most valuable asset and every decision should be in their best interest. Schools should give all students opportunities to achieve and succeed to the best of their abilities. Schools should provide a safe, positive, and welcoming environment that emphasizes integrity, pride, acceptance, and mutual respect and will allow students to become responsible and caring adults.

II. MOUNTAINSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION

The Mountainside Public School District is committed to academic excellence and providing an equitable, whole-child education for all K-8 students to ensure they are well-prepared for high school, and empowered with the knowledge, literacy, and social and emotional skills needed to be lifelong learners and shape the world around them. The District promotes a collaborative and supportive learning environment, infusing a comprehensive curriculum with 21st century skills that encourage communication and innovative, creative and critical thinking. It is our goal that all our students become informed, empathetic and productive citizens who are responsible on a personal, community and global level. The Board of Education, administration, and staff, working together with students, parents and the community, are accountable for achieving this vision.

III. MOUNTAINSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT GOALS for the 2026-2027 School Year

A. Student Achievement

By June 2027, at least 70% of K–5 students who are at-risk and receiving support services will meet or exceed their personalized i-Ready Annual Stretch Growth targets in Reading and/or Mathematics, achieved through targeted, purposeful instruction while restricting classroom and student technology use strictly to aligned, high-impact educational activities.

B. Community Relations

By February 28, 2027, the Mountainside Public School District will execute a comprehensive, multi-channel public information campaign to reach at least 85% of registered voter households, hosting 3 town hall meetings and distributing bi-weekly informational updates to ensure the community is fully informed about the proposed facility improvements on the March 2027 referendum ballot.

C. Staff Wellness & Development

By June 2027, the Mountainside Public School District will reduce staff workload stress and increase instructional efficiency by implementing targeted AI/technology integration training, streamlining administrative duties (e.g., report card comments and meetings), and providing dedicated collaborative planning time, resulting in at least a 25% increase in staff agreement regarding workload manageability and adequate planning support on the annual staff climate survey with a minimum of 50% of staff participating in at least one wellness activity and 80%

participating in professional development, as measured by attendance records and post-session feedback surveys.

IV. ACADEMICS

A. Homework Guidelines and Requests

Homework is an extension and reinforcement of what occurs in the classroom. It enables students to reflect upon and react to learning experiences in a meaningful way. It allows students to demonstrate their independent abilities which informs teachers' decision making to most appropriately support student progress. We expect every student to accept the responsibility for completing homework neatly, accurately, and on time. While parents/guardians are supportive and encouraging, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to complete assignments that represent the student's best quality and effort. On average, primary school students can expect to receive **10-30 minutes of pencil/paper homework per evening**. For more specific homework policy information, parents/guardians can contact individual teachers.

In the event a student was or is going to be absent from school due to illness or other excused absence as defined by Policy and Regulation 5200, a parent/guardian may contact their child's teacher to request missed work/homework. The homework and related materials may be picked up in the main office by a parent/guardian, sibling, classmate, or other designated person a day following the date of the request, or sooner if indicated by the teacher.

Student vacations while school is in session should be avoided and will not result in the provision of work, prepared ahead of time by the teacher, for the student to complete while vacationing.

B. Grading/Report Cards

Kindergarten, first, and second grade students have reading, writing, phonics, mathematics, science and social studies as core academic subjects. They also have art, music, physical education, and H.A.M.S.T.E.R. (Humanities, Art, Math, Science, Technology, Engineering, Reading) as special area classes. Preschool (PEAK) students receive report cards each trimester reflecting their progress towards developmental and academic readiness skills as well.

The grades for academic content areas and special area classes are 4=Exceeds Standards, 3=Achieves Standards, 2=Approaching Standards, and 1=Needs Support. The legend for interpreting behaviors that support learning is C=Consistently, U=Usually, S=Sometimes, and I=Infrequently.

All Beechwood students will receive report cards via the Genesis Parent Portal in December, March, and June. Student progress will also be shared during scheduled parent-teacher conferences in late fall. Additional student progress meetings may be requested by parents or teachers, and scheduled at an agreed upon time.

Trimester	Trimester Dates	Genesis Portal Open to Families
1 st (T1)	9/8/26 - 12/4/26	Friday, December 18, 2026
2 nd (T2)	12/5/26 - 3/12/27	Friday, March 25, 2027
3 rd (T3)	3/13/27 – 6/22/27	Friday, June 25, 2027

Questions related to report cards should be directed to your child's teacher(s).

V. ATTENDANCE

A. General Provisions

New Jersey state law requires that students attend school regularly, and it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to see their children attend school on every day that the public schools are in session (N.J.S.A. 18A: 38-25). In order to facilitate students' opportunity for success, staff will work cooperatively with parents/guardians to assure students attend school daily. In order to ensure students attend school on a regular basis, the following guidelines and protocols are in place:

- When a student is absent, notify school using the [Genesis Parent Portal](#):
 - In the portal, note the absence under "Student Data > Attendance > Notify Office" tabs.
 - **In addition to the portal, please also update PUP (Pick Up Patrol) to indicate the student is absent.**
 - If a student is absent and the school has not been notified, the school will call the parent/guardian or emergency contacts provided to us in Genesis. If no one can be reached to verify the student's whereabouts, a police officer may be dispatched to the student's home to conduct a wellness check.
- Students must be in attendance for a **minimum of four hours** on a given school day in order to participate in or attend any extracurricular activities that are held that day.

Please note: **ALL STUDENT ABSENCES are "unexcused"** and count towards state monitored truancy/chronic absenteeism with these limited exceptions:

- [Religious observances](#) (pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16)
- Participation in Veteran's Day activities (November 11th) and/or Take Your Children to Work Day (4th Thursday in April)
- Closure of a busing school district that prevents a student from having transportation to the receiving school

All school districts are required to provide data to the NJ Department of Education to monitor attendance rates, specifically noting rates of truancy and/or chronic absenteeism. Please note:

- The threshold for truancy is defined as 10 or more unexcused absences within a school year.
- The threshold for chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or 18 days, excused or unexcused, within a school year.

You can monitor your child's attendance record in the Genesis Parent Portal. Your school Principal will also notify you and follow these procedures to prevent further absenteeism, ultimately to ensure students' right to education and prevent further truancy as outlined in [District Regulation 5200](#).

# of Absences	Principal or Designee Action	Purpose
Up to 5	Letter to Parents/Guardians through Genesis	Alert families of the concern and (re)/educate about the attendance policy
Up to 9	Letter to Parents/Guardians through Genesis and potential meeting scheduled with Principal or designee	Collaborative review of the nature of the absences to determine need for a student corrective action plan (CAP) based on the pattern of absences.
10 or more (truant and approaching chronic absenteeism which is 10% of school days).	Letter to Parents/Guardians through Genesis, meeting with Principal or Designee, Implementation of a student corrective action plan (CAP)	To avoid any further unexcused absences. If a student is chronically absent the Principal shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meet with parents/guardians to adjust the CAP as needed ○ Determine need for a court referral for the truancy ○ Consider retention in cases of insufficient academic progress.

Please be aware of the following additional expectations and regulations:

- Students who have an extended or serious illness shall not be charged with absences provided they are under a doctor's care and are receiving home instruction.
- Students who are absent from school due to observance of a religious holiday shall not be deprived of any award or eligibility thereof or opportunity to compete for any award, or of the right to take an alternate test/examination, as long as an absence note is submitted in Genesis.
- Teachers will cooperate in the preparation of home assignments for students who anticipate extended absence due to illness or family emergency.
- Students absent for any reason are expected to make up the work missed. The parent or student is responsible for requesting missed assignments and any assistance required. Teachers will provide make-up assignments as necessary.

- In general, students will be allowed a reasonable amount of time as determined by the teacher to make up the work missed.
- A student who missed a test or an exam shall be offered an opportunity to take the test, exam, or an appropriate alternate test.
- Scheduling vacations during the school year is strongly discouraged in that students miss valuable instructional time. **Teachers will not be able to provide a list of specific assignments in advance** but will make assignments available and set due dates for students within a reasonable amount of time upon return.

B. Late Arrivals

Students are expected to be **in their classroom by 8:30 a.m.** Students who arrive late to school are to be accompanied to the main entrance with their parent/guardian for the parent/guardian to sign the tardy student into school. If you anticipate your child being more than a few minutes late to school, notify school using the Genesis Parent Portal.

Establishing positive habits for a timely arrival to school is important for each student as well as the smooth operation of the building.

- Upon the 4th late arrival, a letter from the school principal will be mailed home.
- Upon the 8th late arrival, a conference with the parent and the school principal will be arranged.
- Upon every subsequent 4th late arrival, a conference with the parent and the school principal will be arranged.

C. Early Dismissals

If a student will be picked up early notify school using the [Genesis Parent Portal](#):

1. In the portal, record details for the main office under the "Student Data ->Attendance -> Notify Office" tabs.
2. **In addition, please also email your teacher and enter plan changes impacting dismissal in PUP.**
3. Park in the parking lot and ring the bell at the main entrance to come in and sign your child in/out.

The parent/guardian who is picking up the student must personally sign out and pick up the child in the main entrance of the school, at which time, he/she may be asked to display personal identification. This is for security purposes. Siblings who are under the age of 18 will not be permitted to sign students out under any circumstances.

If a parent/guardian wishes to change student pick-up procedure, this can be updated in the Pick Up Patrol app until 2:30 pm. If you need to make a dismissal plan change later than that, **please contact the main office at (908) 301-9104 ext. 200** and the message will be relayed to the classroom teacher. Please do not assume your child's teacher will retrieve a timely message before dismissal. Additionally, **substitute teachers do not have access to the teacher's voicemail or emails, which is another reason we ask you to message the main office.**

VI. SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

A. Communication with Staff Members

Parents/guardians are partners in the educational process. It is essential for parents/guardians and staff members to communicate with one another in terms of student progress and behavior. Frequent contact through telephone calls, e-mail, conferences, and publications is vital in that the success of primary school students is contingent upon continual communication.

Staff members can be contacted by telephone at (908) 301-9104 followed by the respective extension. A list of staff members, telephone extensions, and e-mail addresses is linked to the school website.

Most staff members can be contacted through email that aligns with their first initial, last name, followed by @mountainsideschools.org. For example, if you wished to contact Mary Smith (fictitious teacher for example only), you would use this address: msmith@mountainsideschools.org. *Please note that there are a limited number of staff members whose email differs from this norm. Don't hesitate to contact building secretary, Maryann Brown at mbrown@mountainsideschools.org if you need assistance.

Parents/guardians are reminded that teachers may have limited availability to email, or to make or return phone calls during the course of the school day. Staff will always make every effort to respond to all outreach within 24 hours.

All parents/guardians coming to school must sign-in and sign-out in the main office on the visitor log unless instructed otherwise by school administration.

B. Support Services

Counseling - Mrs. Ramona Kuznedelov - rkuznedelov@mountainsideschools.org
908-301-9104 x378

Beechwood School has a school guidance counselor who provides services for the student population. Parents/guardians are to make every effort to contact the school counselor in the event they notice a significant change in their child's behavior and/or attitude. The counselor can be helpful regarding conflict resolution if a parent/ guardian notices that students are having difficulty relating to one another. Our school guidance counselor is instrumental in dealing with the many personalities and challenges associated with primary school, and is our expert in helping our young students navigate challenges and support their needs in a developmentally appropriate manner. Our counselor visits classrooms to support positive social skills development for all students, as well. In its entirety, the primary school counseling program encompasses: transition/orientation, character education, crisis intervention, problem solving, individual counseling, small group counseling, classroom developmental counseling,

parent/family involvement, and consultation/collaboration with staff members, parents/guardians, mental health professionals, and community members.

RTI (formerly I&RS) - Beechwood also has a Response To Intervention (RTI) team which is comprised of teachers, a Child Study Team representative, a school nurse, and a school administrator. When a concern arises pertaining to the academic and/or social-emotional growth of a student, parents/guardians and/or staff members may share the concern with the building administrator. After the concern is shared, a recommendation may be made to schedule an RTI team meeting. The purpose of an RTI team meeting is often for teachers to communicate with the student's parents/guardians in order to identify the difficulties the student is experiencing and create a collaboratively developed action plan to assist. When additional input is necessary beyond the provisions of a general education program, the RTI team may make a referral to the district's Child Study Team (CST) to determine the need for a comprehensive evaluation of the student and potential eligibility for special education support. The RTI team oversees progress monitoring of all students, and may make recommendations for support without convening as a group.

Child Study Team - With parent/guardian consent, Beechwood provides special education services to classified students via Child Study Team (CST) recommendations. The CST includes the Learning Disabilities Teacher-Consultant (LDT-C), the school psychologist, the school social worker, and the school speech therapist. The LDT-C works directly with classroom teachers, observing and offering academic and classroom management strategies to assist students who are experiencing difficulties. The school psychologist is available to students for counseling purposes and to parents/guardians for additional support strategies relative to student behavior. In addition, the school social worker can guide the development of social skills. The CST may conduct an evaluation to determine whether or not a student is eligible for special education and related services. Each CST member may serve as case manager for students who are referred for evaluation or who are identified as needing special education services. The case manager coordinates the development, monitoring, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). This staff member facilitates communication between home and school and facilitates the annual review and re-evaluation process.

Nurse - Mrs. Lisa Bruno, libruno@mountainsideschools.org 908-301-9104 x202, 908-481-1540 (fax)

The Beechwood school nurse is a health professional whose responsibilities include providing basic health care for students, acting as a liaison to parents/guardians specific to student illness and absence from school, handling emergency situations, and serving as a resource person for the RTI and Child Study Teams.

504 Plans of Accommodations

A Section 504 Plan mandated for students under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 outlines the accommodations and services that a student with a disability needs to access education, ensuring they have equal opportunities to learn in a general education classroom setting. Students are eligible for a 504 plan if they have a physical or mental diagnosis that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Please contact Mrs. Kuznedelov, the 504 Committee Chairperson, if you feel your child requires an accommodated learning environment.

AIM (Academic Intervention for Mastery) - Beechwood provides basic skills instruction as one of its student support services. AIM includes supplemental instruction in the core content areas of language arts literacy or mathematics and is available to all general education students with a demonstrated need. Students below academic grade level expectations may be eligible for this “Tier 1, 2 or 3” level support based on need according to teacher recommendations, assessment data, and RTI meeting action plans. The teachers who provide this instruction collaborate with the student’s homeroom teacher and provide AIM support through a push in or pull out model. Student progress is monitored to determine recommendations to continue or exit this program, or perhaps seek alternate means of support.

MLs (Multilingual Learners; *formerly ESL*) - Beechwood students whose primary spoken language is one other than English are screened to determine their level of English proficiency. During this process, state criteria are utilized to ascertain eligibility for assistance in language acquisition. Eligible ML students will receive support to promote English language learning.

G&T Programming (Gifted & Talented) - The Mountainside School District's Gifted and Talented program provides enrichment opportunities to students demonstrating high abilities in one or more areas through a continuum of services. In Grades K-2, identified students will be provided with collaborative and individual enrichment opportunities through differentiated instruction. This differentiation will be facilitated within the student’s classroom by the homeroom teacher and/or the district’s G&T teacher. The district’s G&T teacher will additionally coach our staff in best practices in promoting critical/divergent thinking for all students. H.A.M.S.T.E.R. (humanities, arts, math, science, technology, engineering, and reading) class is also designed to immerse students in educational experiences that develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills across multiple subject areas. Visit the [G&T webpage](#) for additional program information.

VII. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In the section that follows, we have provided an alphabetical listing of several guidelines parents/guardians and students can familiarize themselves with to better understand general school policies and procedures.

A. Birthday Class Celebrations

We know this is so important for our students! Parents are invited to be their child's special guest according to details shared by your child's teacher. This often takes place as parents being invited as a guest reader either in person or remotely. Parents can also consider gifting a book through the PTO's "Birthday Book Club" program. Details will be shared by the school and your child's teacher, and should be coordinated with the homeroom teacher. **Food, treats, balloons and/or goodie bags are not allowed in school to celebrate your child's birthday.**

B. Birthday Invitations

Birthday invitations for outside of school celebrations may be distributed as a courtesy to families at school if an invitation is provided for every student in the classroom. There can be no exceptions. See your child's teacher or the PTO Directory (once published - typically by late fall) for a class list.

C. Building Appearance

Our custodial staff members work very hard to keep Beechwood School clean. Every student is to respect and care for the building with a great degree of enthusiasm in order to contribute toward maintaining a pleasant learning environment. Students are to take pride in the appearance of our school by refraining from defacing and vandalizing school property and by removing debris when appropriate.

D. Busing/Bus Evacuation Drills

Students must have a bus pass to ride the bus and are not allowed to ride a different bus than the one assigned to them. Requests for your child to ride another student's bus will not be honored. However, if you need your child to get off his/her bus at a stop other than their own, please contact Mrs. Donna Bolton, Transportation Coordinator, at the board office at 908-301-9104, x105 or dbolton@mountainsideschools.org. See the section regarding bus expectations in the Student Code of Conduct for additional information (Section VIII of this handbook).

New Jersey state law requires schools to conduct bus evacuation drills. During a bus evacuation drill, students are to leave all of their personal belongings on the bus (should they have them with them) and exit the rear of the bus quickly, silently, and in a single file line. Upon exiting, students are to bend down or sit at the rear bus exit door and use their hands and arms to brace themselves as they hop out of the actual bus. Our students will be assisted by an adult (teacher, police officer, bus driver, and/or building administrator) to ensure their safety. Once students have exited the bus, they are to

stand quietly and wait until the signal is given for them to return to the bus and gather their personal belongings. Students can then proceed to their classes in an orderly fashion.

E. Delayed Openings/Early Dismissals/Emergency School Closings

Parents/guardians are notified of a **delayed opening** with as much advance notice as possible. Notification includes a text, email, and/or call from the School Messenger system. Should an **early dismissal** be called during the school day, parents/ guardians will receive a text, email, and/or call from the School Messenger system. Information will also be posted on the Mountainside School District website.

Prior to an **emergency school closing**, parents/guardians will receive a call from the School Messenger automated telephone system. The Mountainside School District website is another resource for this information. Parents/guardians are advised to plan ahead to make arrangements for child care should no one be home during the school day.

F. Drop Off/Pickup

Parents of students in grades K-2 are to drive through the car-line lane. Parents walking their children to school must remain on the sidewalk, and adhere to the “student only” zone surrounding the building entrance area. Parking in the main school lot is extremely limited and should be utilized by Pre-School families only. Those with an extenuating circumstance that prevents the student from independently exiting/entering their vehicle with the assistance of morning duty staff at the car line can pull around to the small, side BOE parking lot along the curb to exit their vehicle and assist their child as necessary. Arrival begins promptly at 8:15 a.m. and concludes at 8:30 a.m. Students arriving past 8:30 a.m. will need to be signed in by an adult at the main office entrance. Students are to enter through their grade-level designated entrance. Cars may arrive for dismissal at 2:40 p.m. Student dismissal will begin at 2:55 p.m. **Walkers must report to Mrs. Vierschilling/Mrs. Castro to be checked in through PickUp Patrol (PUP).**

G. Electronic Devices/Toys

Electronic handheld games are not permitted in school. Staff members will confiscate these items if students are seen handling or using them in school. Once a staff member has confiscated an electronic device, it will be turned over to the building administrator. The first time this occurs, the item will be returned to the student at the end of the school day. The second incident will result in the item being returned to the student’s parent/guardian.

Internet-Enabled handheld or wearable electronic devices capable of photographic, video, or telephone communication are discouraged. **If a family chooses to send such devices to school, they must remain off and away in the student’s backpack.**

The school is not responsible for theft, loss, or damage of an electronic device. See regulation 5516 for more details.

Toys are considered to be disruptive to the learning process. We strongly discourage students from bringing any toys to school unless such a plan has been established with the teacher. Once a staff member has confiscated a toy or other disruptive article, it will be turned over to the building administrator. The first time this occurs, the article will be returned to the student at the end of the school day. The second incident will result in the article being returned to the student's parent/guardian.

H. Field Trips

Field trips are an important enhancement to our instructional curriculum. Typically, one field trip experience is planned for all K-2 students per year. All students will be required to follow rules/protocols set forth by the location. Your child's teacher will update you regarding field trips for your child.

I. Food – Snacks & Lunch

Children are provided with a 40 minute lunch/recess period, an additional snack time in their classroom, and a 20 minute recess period each day. Weather permitting, recess is outdoors, otherwise it is held indoors in the child's classroom. Please pack a healthy snack for your child to eat during their daily snack time. Your child's snack should be packed separately from their lunch and placed in a paper bag or small reusable lunch box clearly marked with your child's name and indication of which bag is their snack.

Our food services provider is Maschio's. Students are able to purchase hot/cold lunch items from the available lunch menu, or pack their own lunch each day. Additionally, students may purchase snack items to supplement their lunch meal to eat in the cafeteria. For more information including menus, pricing details, and how to load funds to your child's cafeteria account, please consult the cafeteria/food services tab on the [district website](#).

To promote inclusivity, we are a nut-free school. Thank you in advance for avoiding snack and lunch food items that contain or were processed in a facility that produces items with nuts/peanuts. Contact the school nurse regarding questions about any food item ingredients.

J. Fire Drills

New Jersey state law requires schools to regularly conduct fire drills. Every classroom and shared space such as the gymnasium has posted fire drill procedures as well as a map of fire drill escape routes. During a fire drill, students are to walk quickly, silently, and in a single file line from the classroom. Students who are not with their regular class when the fire alarm sounds are to report to the nearest staff member and give his/her name to that individual for attendance/security purposes. While outside, students are to pay attention to the supervising adult, stand quietly and wait for the signal to return to

the building. After the signal, students can return to their classrooms in an orderly fashion. Students are to be aware of alternate routes to evacuate the building should designated evacuation routes be blocked.

K. Lockdown/Evacuation and Other Emergency Drills

NJ state law requires schools to regularly conduct monthly emergency drills in addition to monthly fire drills. In the event of an emergency which requires students and staff members to remain in their classrooms or exit the building, it is essential that all students fully cooperate by following their teacher's directions. Principals will notify families by the end of the school day via email following each emergency drill.

L. Media Center

Students will visit the media center during their scheduled library time each week. The school media specialist will provide detailed instructions to students and families on how to borrow books and place books on hold.

M. Medication Procedures/Notes for the Nurse

The school nurse is responsible for supervising the administration of all medications, including both prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications, during the school day. All medications must be provided in their original, properly labeled containers and accompanied by a completed School Nurse Authorization Form for Prescription and OTC Medication (found on the district website under the health office tab)

Students who sustain an injury requiring medical evaluation and are unable to participate in physical education (PE) must submit a physician's note to the school nurse indicating the reason for the restriction and the anticipated duration of the limitation. Students who are excused from PE will not be permitted to participate in recess unless the physician's note specifically states that recess activities are permitted.

Parent or guardian requests to excuse a student from physical education for more than three consecutive days cannot be accepted without medical documentation. Students with ongoing medical conditions that prevent participation in physical education throughout the school year must provide an updated physician's note to the school nurse each September to continue receiving a PE exemption.

N. Personal Possessions (Lost and Found)

Personal possessions are brought to school at the student's own risk. To increase the chance of returning lost articles to the rightful owner, please mark all items brought to school with the student's name. Staff members are not responsible for any damages, thefts, or losses relative to personal possessions. This includes jewelry, money, and other valuables. Such items, when found, are to be brought to the main office. Students may check the lost and found for missing items. The lost and found is located inside the main doors of Beechwood near the main office. Unclaimed lost and found items are periodically donated. Donation times will be announced before they occur.

O. Pets/Animals

No pets or animals are permitted at school given this may negatively impact students with allergies. If a student wishes to utilize a pet/animal as part of a presentation directly related to the curriculum, the student must obtain permission from the building administrator in advance. Parents are discouraged from bringing pets to arrival/dismissal.

P. Recording Devices/Cell Phones/Smart Watches

During the school day, from arrival to dismissal and including the buses, students are not permitted to be in possession of or use tape recorders, video cameras, standard handheld cameras, disposable cameras, digital cameras, cellular telephones, Smart watches or other recording devices at Beechwood. These items will be confiscated by staff members if students are handling or using them during the school day. Once a staff member has confiscated a recording device, it will be turned over to the building administrator. The first time this occurs, the item will be returned to the student at the end of the school day. The second incident will result in the item being returned to the student's parent/guardian. Allowances may be made by the building administrator for the use of recording devices in school for instructional purposes or at school functions. If a student is uncertain as to whether or not it is appropriate to bring one of these items in, the student is to ask his/her teacher(s) or the building administrator. Should these items be brought to school, they must remain away in the student's backpack. See Regulation 5516 for details.

Q. Telephone Usage

Parents will be notified by the classroom teacher or the school secretary if there are any questions or concerns raised by the student during the school day. Students will not be able to come down to the office to use the telephone to directly contact a parent/guardian unless facilitated by a staff member. Parents/guardians should not initiate communication with their child on a personal device during the school day. Rather, contact the main office by phone or email.

VIII. CODE OF CONDUCT

Please review the following general expectations for behavior and possible consequences with your child.

Beechwood School is a place for learning, and every student should be able to learn in a school that is safe and orderly. We believe that children must understand that their behavior can in no way deprive other children of their right to learn. As a staff, we are committed to creating and maintaining an atmosphere that will make our school a happy and safe place for all children, and a place that is conducive to learning. The school district's common goal related to discipline reflects a desire that all children learn that good citizens are honest, responsible, respect themselves, respect others and the property of others. Students, parents and staff must share responsibility for creating an optimal school setting. To achieve this, students will be held responsible for the choices

they make regarding behavior. Teachers, administrators, staff and parents must work together as a team with a clear understanding of expectations and procedures, as well as developmentally appropriate consequences guided by restorative justice practices.

Restorative Justice is guided by a philosophy that fosters social and emotional well-being, acceptance, empowerment, and mutual respect for those who are impacted by and involved in conflict. Mountainside strives to build cultures and communities of responsibility, respect, and reparation of relationships where harm has occurred. Restorative Justice seeks to cultivate an equitable environment where all individuals feel safe, included, heard and will benefit from shared learning experiences. Mountainside will provide integrated methods to address conflict through reflection, reconciliation and accountability where harm has occurred.

Please refer to [District Policy 5600](#) for additional information and details regarding the district's Code of Conduct.

A. Expectations for Behavior:

Students at Beechwood School are respectful and responsible when they are:

- Being kind and respectful to all students by treating others the way they want to be treated, by keeping their hands and feet to themselves, and by using friendly language, playing fairly and including anyone who reasonably wants to join a game or other activity
- Practicing self control by being patient, taking turns, and using words to solve problems and express feelings.
- Caring for school property and by helping to keep our school clean and safe
- Following the directions given by teachers, instructional aides and parent volunteers in all situations - the classroom, bathroom, hallways, playground, lunchroom, and bus.

At Beechwood, it is our intent to create a stable social and emotional learning environment for our students. Students are encouraged to make good choices through systems of positive reinforcement. When a child is having difficulty following school expectations set forth in the Code of Conduct, logical consequences are necessary. Logical consequences are not punishments, but a way to help students remediate the inappropriate behavior and learn the appropriate behavior expected of all members of the Beechwood learning community.

Our goal is to help children learn from their mistakes to promote pro-social future decision making. Logical consequences related to the misbehavior typically accompany a discussion/reflection opportunity with an adult following the mistake. Consequences will be determined according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student and the student's history of previous behavior concerns.

All staff members have the responsibility to address behavioral issues when they occur. The staff member(s) will speak to the child and, if necessary, contact will be made with

the parent. If necessary, the staff member(s) will involve the Principal. Significant Code of Conduct violation impacting the safety of others will be addressed by the Principal.

B. Possible Consequences & Remediation Measures

- Staff member and/or Principal discusses the problem with the student
- Student is provided an opportunity for reflection and developmentally appropriate problem solving.
- Student remediates the situation as appropriate. This may include a verbal or written apology or restitution/restoration for damaged property.
- Consequences imposed may include a temporary loss of privileges, temporary removal from the classroom, or brief loss of recess time (up to 5 minutes).
- Significant and/or repetitive violations may result in loss of a major school privilege (i.e. classroom celebration, field day) or in-school/out of school suspension.
- Consequences imposed are determined at the discretion of the school administration, depending on the frequency and severity of the situation.
- A staff member or Principal will contact the parent/guardian (phone, email, letter) for recurring or significant concerns.

C. Acceptable Use Policy

Appropriate computer use is an expectation for kindergarten, first, and second grade students. Staff members allow students to use their devices and appropriate educational websites as a resource to aid in the learning process. See detailed guidelines in the district's [Acceptable Use Policy](#).

D. Dress Code

The purpose of the dress code is to develop an appropriate tone that contributes to a safe and positive learning environment with minimal distraction.

Students must wear shoes that promote safe play inside and outside. Strapless sandals and/or flip flops should not be worn to school. Sneakers must be worn on physical education class days. Students will have to sit out if appropriate footwear is not available.

Head accessories worn for religious purposes or medical concerns are permitted.

E. Bus Discipline

The primary function of the bus driver is to transport students safely to and from school. If the driver is preoccupied with disciplining students, it increases the chance that an accident may occur. For bus safety purposes, a set of rules and consequences is listed below.

Bus Rules:

1. Students are to remain in their seat for the entire ride.
2. Students are not permitted to eat or drink on the bus. This includes gum chewing, candy, water bottles, etc.
3. Littering is not to occur.
4. Students must use appropriate language on the bus.
5. Students must use an “inside voice” and are not permitted to scream or make excessive noise on the bus.
6. Students must keep their hands and bodies inside the bus at all times.
7. Students are not permitted to throw objects or spit out of the window.
8. Students are not permitted to throw or shoot objects on the bus.
9. Vandalism is not permitted on the bus. This includes writing on bus seats (floors, ceilings, sides, and windows) and/or ripping/cutting bus seats.
10. Fighting and horseplay are not permitted on the bus.
11. Bus drivers deserve the same level of respect as do all teachers and other staff members at school.

Students must ride the bus the transportation department has assigned for them. To be clear, a student may not ride on another student’s bus to or from school at any time. Written and verbal requests to do so will be denied. Only those students who have been given permission to ride the bus may do so. Only routine, scheduled pickups and stops will be made. If a student needs to be dropped off at a stop other than his/her own, or dismissed at their stop to an adult other than their parent/guardian, a note must be sent to the transportation coordinator or the main office. The school will complete a bus pass for the bus driver. Parents must be present at the bus stop to supervise their K-4th grade student at the bus stop. K-4th grade students will not be dismissed from the bus when their adult is not present. In this case, the driver will bring the student back to school for parent/guardian pick up.

Consequences for Bus Infractions:

If a student does not follow the bus rules, he/she will be referred to the building administrator. Students and parents/guardians are to note that appropriate administrative action will be taken which may include: the issuance of a bus contract, lunch/recess detention, suspension or removal of bus privileges, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, restitution assignment, and/or police contact. At all times, the building administrator reserves the right to intervene and take action if student behavior is deemed inappropriate or in violation of district-wide Code of Conduct policies.

In addition, students and parents/guardians are to be aware of the fact that the school day begins as soon as students reach the bus stop and does not conclude until students exit the bus on the ride home. This extends to after-school activities and field trips as well. If students choose to misbehave at the bus stop on the way to or from school, they will be held accountable for their actions. Parents/guardians will be contacted in regard

to bus offenses as needed. With respect to the suspension of bus privileges, New Jersey state law permits staff members to deny bus transportation privileges if a student's conduct warrants such action. If transportation privileges are denied, it becomes the responsibility of the student's parents/guardians to see that he/she arrives at school and is transported home at dismissal.

F. Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB)

The Mountainside School District is committed to providing an educational environment for all students, employees, and volunteers that is safe, civil and free from Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB). "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 an 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 by any other distinguishing characteristic;
2. 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;
3. Substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; **and that**
 - a. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; **or**
 - b. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; **or**
 - c. Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

HIB behaviors can take many forms including but are not limited to: slurs, rumors, jokes, demeaning comments, cartoons, pranks, gestures, physical attacks, threats, or other written, verbal, electronic, or physical actions. **Some of these behaviors may not meet the definition of the harassment, intimidation, or bullying law, but may violate building, classroom, or program conduct rules and will be dealt with by the building administration, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.**

After a full investigation has been completed, if it has been determined that an HIB act has occurred, counseling, corrective discipline, and/or referral to law enforcement will be used to change the behavior of the perpetrator and remediate the impact on the victim. False reports or retaliation for harassment, intimidation or bullying will also result in disciplinary action. District policy ([Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying](#)).

[File Code 5512](#)) fully explains the HIB Law as well as interventions and remediation that building and district administrators may recommend. Please familiarize yourself with this policy by reading it in its entirety. The policy, procedures, and FAQs can be found on the [district's website](#). Distinguishing between student conflict and possible HIB can sometimes be difficult. Please contact your school Principal to discuss any concerns, or report an allegation of HIB to the Principal using the [HIB Reporting Form for Families](#). This can also be found on the district's website in English and other languages. Parents can also bring any student-student concerns to their classroom teacher, and/or the school's anti-Bullying Specialist, Mrs. Ramona Kuznedelov 908-301-9104 x378.

IX. A FINAL NOTE

Thank you for taking the time to read and review the student handbook with your child. Please understand that each child's safety is our primary concern. We look forward to working with you. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns. As a reminder, this link to the district's [general communication procedures and chain of command](#) (page 8) can help to point you in the right direction depending on the nature of your question or concern.

X. APPENDIX

[Board of Education Policy 5512 – Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying](#)
[Mountainside School District Calendar](#)

Beechwood Arrival and Dismissal Times:

Grade	Regular Day	Early Dismissal	Delayed Opening
Kindergarten, 1st & 2nd Grades	Arrival: 8:15 - 8:30 am Dismissal: 2:55 - 3:10 pm	Arrival: 8:15-8:30 am Dismissal: 12:45 - 1:00 pm	Arrival: 10:15-10:30 am Dismissal: 2:55 - 3:10 pm
P.E.A.K. AM Class	8:15-11:15 am	8:15-10:15 am	10:30-12:15 pm
P.E.A.K. PM Class	12:00-3:00 pm	11:00-1:00 pm	1:15-3:00 pm

Genesis Parent Portal Link:

<https://parents.c1.genesisedu.net/msd/sis/view?gohome=true>