

Brookside School

The Monroe Public Schools in collaboration with the members of the community shall ensure that all children receive an exemplary education by well-trained committed staff in a safe and orderly environment.

PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026

Dear Parents & Family Members,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 School Year! I hope you all had a relaxing and enjoyable summer. We are excited to open our doors on September 3rd and welcome all our new and returning students. For our new families to Brookside, we are glad to have you become part of our school. The entire Brookside staff are eager to work with you to make this an outstanding year for your children.

During the last two months, we have been getting the school ready for our students. The custodial staff, office staff, and technology staff have worked extremely hard this summer to prepare the building for the upcoming school year. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge the teachers and their dedication to creating such inviting classroom environments that the students will see and become part of on the first day of school.

We have had the opportunity to welcome three new members for the 2026-27 school year. Please join me in welcoming the following new staff to Brookside!

Bonnie Dibenedetto – Special Education Paraprofessional; **Kami Ives** – Teacher of Speech; and **Rachel Zettell** – Learning Consultant.

The Barclay Brook/Brookside PTA is an important part of our school community. The PTA Officers are as follows: **Jessica Glavin** (President); **Kaitki Kumar** (Treasurer); and **Christina Thondique and Poonam Patel** (Secretaries). I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Barclay Brook/Brookside PTA for all that you do for our students! It is most appreciated, and our students are lucky to have you.

In this newsletter is our student arrival and dismissal procedures. Please take a moment to review these procedures. We appreciate your support and cooperation in helping to keep all our students safe!

Each new school year brings with it some anticipation and excitement. The opportunity given to us to help your children grow and develop in all areas is something we hold of high importance. Please engage with our school as a partner in your child's growth and progress this year. It truly takes a village, and we are eager to work with you to help your child be successful.

Respectfully,

Scott Sidler
Principal

VISIT US ON THE INTERNET AT <http://www.monroe.k12.nj.us>

SCHOOL HOURS

Regular School Day	9:05 - 3:34 p.m.
Four Hour Session Day	9:05 - 1:05 p.m.
Delayed Opening	11:05 - 3:34 p.m.

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT

Brookside's "Back to School Night" is on September 9 at 6:30 p.m. This is a wonderful opportunity to visit your child's classroom, meet his/her teacher, and get an overview of our educational programs. Please be available to attend this informative evening. Parking is available at Brookside School in addition to the bus lot between Barclay Brook and Brookside.

SCHOOL PICTURES

We have scheduled school pictures for September 23. We have scheduled the make-up picture day for November 10. We will send home ordering information for our picture day in September.

STUDENT ABSENCES

If your child is going to be absent or tardy, please enter it into Genesis (Parent Portal) so the main office and the nurse can prepare attendance for the day. If you have any questions, please contact the school nurse at 732-521-1101 ext. 7505 or the main office at 732-521-1101. **Please do not enter notes about your child leaving early.** There is a different procedure in place to notify the school if you plan to pick up your child from school. Please refer to the procedure section of this newsletter. **Please do not email your child's teacher directly because if your child's teacher is absent that day, security will not be expecting you.** If you have any questions, please contact the Brookside main office at 732-521-1101.

STUDENT ARRIVAL/DROP OFF

Students can be dropped off from 8:50 -9:10 a.m. using the parent drop-off area which is near door #16 on the right side of the building. Follow the sign for parent drop-off using the side driveway. You remain in your vehicle, drive up to the staff member by door #16, and your child exits your vehicle and enters the building using door #16. **The circular driveway is closed during student arrival.**

If your child arrives after 9:10 a.m. and a staff member is not present by door #16, you will need to drop your child off in front of the school to be signed in at security using the circular driveway.

If you have any questions about the student arrival procedure, please contact the Brookside Main Office. We appreciate your cooperation in advance with this procedure.

STUDENT DISMISSAL/PICKUP PROCEDURE

The procedure if you need to pick up your child from school starts with you entering your pickup request through the Parent Portal in Genesis. We have attached a sample request to this newsletter. You will select the day, enter the time, and who is the authorized person that will be picking up. You can enter this at any time since it's through Parent Portal. **The cutoff time to schedule a pickup for the same day is 3:00 p.m.** If an emergency comes up and you need to pick up your child after 3:00 p.m. but before dismissal, please call the main office and we will assist you; we will notify your child's teacher and security to expect you. **If your child is a daily pickup for the entire year, you should write a note and send it in with your child on the first day of school.** We will automatically put your child on the pickup list each day.

If you have any questions about the student pickup procedure, please contact the Brookside Main Office. We appreciate your cooperation in advance with this procedure.

FREE/REDUCED LUNCH

Applications for free/reduced lunch are available online on the district website under Food Services. **If you received services the previous year, you must re-apply each year.**

PARKING PROCEDURES

Brookside parents and visitors must use the visitor parking spots and/or an unmarked parking spot. **If you are picking your child up at dismissal in lieu of the bus, you should park your car on the side parking lot –the circular driveway is closed during student arrival and dismissal.** Please give yourself ample time to park and to sign your child out with security. Thank you for helping us provide a safe environment at dismissal.

VISITORS TO BROOKSIDE

Our school district requires all visitors to identify themselves and state the purpose of their visit upon entering our buildings. **Visitors are required to sign in at the security desk at the main entrance with a photo ID and wear their visitor's badge in a prominent place.** We instruct our staff to question anyone who is not wearing a badge. **Visitors are also required to sign out at the security desk when they are leaving the building and return their visitor badge to security.**

STUDENT BIRTHDAYS

All birthday celebrations will be non-food celebrations. Students will still be recognized and celebrated on their birthday through our birthday bulletin board, loudspeaker announcement, and receipt of a birthday book. We thank you for your attention to this matter as this will help us to maintain a healthy and safe school environment for our students.

INSTRUMENTAL BAND

The instrumental band program will meet during the school day for individual and small group lessons. Your child will receive their lesson schedule once lessons have begun. Students in grade 4 and students new to Brookside School in grade 5 interested in the instrumental band, please contact Lindsey Burrell, our Instrumental Band director at linds.burrell@monroe.k12.nj.us.

FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADE CHORUS

Brookside has fourth and fifth grade chorus that takes place before school during zero period. If you have a child that is interested in joining chorus, please contact Joshua Acampado, our choral director, at Joshua.acampado@momroe.k12.nj.us

ZERO PERIOD ACTIVITIES

Zero Period activities begin at 8:20 a.m. Students may be dropped off, beginning at 8:00 a.m. but no earlier since there is not a staff member to receive them. Drop off takes place in the circular driveway at the front of Brookside. The following activities take place during zero period:

Advanced Band – Tuesday and Wednesday mornings
Fourth Grade Chorus – Monday and Friday mornings
Fifth Grade Chorus – Thursday and Friday mornings
Fourth Grade Art Enrichment – Wednesday mornings
Fifth Grade Art Enrichment – Monday mornings
Code Zero – Monday mornings

PTA

We look forward to an exciting year of PTA activities for our students. Families can show their support by joining the PTA, which is a great way to get involved in our school! By attending PTA meetings and volunteering to help with events and fundraisers, you will give the gift of your time! You will also help get your child excited about events happening at school! Please consider getting actively involved in the PTA, we would love to have you!

A NOTE FROM OUR SCHOOL NURSE, MRS. MARIA DEBELLIS:

Welcome back! A few friendly reminders to have a smooth back-to-school:

- **Prepare them now for school:**
 - Set up consistent after-school and bedtime routine.
 - Provide them with a good breakfast every day.
 - Pack them with enough water and snacks for the day.
 - Practice proper hygiene—handwashing & bathroom hygiene; covering mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing.
- Communicate with me regarding any changes in your child's health. If you have any health-related concerns, please feel free to call me at (732) 521-1101 ext. 7505 or email me at maria.debellis@monroe.k12.nj.us.
- Please inform me if your child has severe food allergies that require them to sit at our Peanut-Free Table.
- **Medication Drop Off Days:** If your child needs any prescribed medications in school: please have an **adult drop off the medication together with the completed and signed forms by your physician in their original, pharmacy-labeled packaging** on the following days:
 - **Tues. Sept. 2 = 12pm – 3:30pm**
 - **Wed. Sept 3 = 9am – 3:30pm**
 - Or by appointment: email me at maria.debellis@monroe.k12.nj.us
 - Over the counter medications also require a completed district form completed, dated, signed and stamped by your physician.

- **Attendance:** Always report absences or tardiness via your Genesis Parent Portal or by calling the school nurse (phone menu option 2). Do not send them to school if they are sick. Call/email me if you are unsure how to proceed.

Wishing you a healthy and productive new school year ahead!

MESSAGE FROM TRANSPORTATION

Bus assignments will be available in Parent Access. No bus passes will be distributed. An email notification will go out to parents when their child's bus assignment is available. In addition, transportation general information and reminders will be available on the district website under "transportation."

Here are a few reminders for parents of children who will be riding the bus to and from school. Please remind your child that their **safety** is our priority. Students should remain seated and buckled in throughout the bus ride, which helps our drivers ensure that all our students have a pleasant and safe trip on the bus. Your help in reinforcing this message with your child is appreciated!

Students are required to always ride their assigned bus and are to get on and off at their assigned bus stop throughout the year. We cannot honor any change requests. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. In addition, please remind your child that no food or drink is permitted on any school bus – for allergy and sanitary reasons. Also, children should refrain from using any scented spray or hand sanitizer while riding the bus. Thank you for working with us to help keep our children safe!

SCHOOL BREAKFAST/LUNCH

Brookside School uses a computerized electronic lunch system. This automated system is very successful in moving students through the lunch line more rapidly and giving them more time to eat as well as easing the ability for parents and students to pay for lunch in advance. Parents can send either cash or check payable to Monroe Township Board of Education at any amount desired. The cost for a student lunch listed below can be calculated weekly or monthly by the number of full school days that month; lunch is not served for half days. You can credit any denomination to your child's account for their use at lunch. Any snack purchased will be an additional debit to the account, so make allowances if you want your child to purchase a snack. **If you want any restrictions noted on your child's account regarding a maximum daily spending limit or no additional purchases aside from regular lunch; please note this when sending money to fund the account.** When an account balance is getting low, the cafeteria cashier will remind your child. If a student has a negative balance on their account, your child can purchase lunch only – no snacks.

Federal guidelines for child nutrition programs require that a student take a fruit or vegetable with their lunch to qualify as a school lunch. **If the student fails to take fruit or vegetables with their lunch, the meal is considered a la carte sale which is often more expensive and less nutritious.** A complete lunch includes a choice of entrée (with bread or grain), vegetables of the day, two servings of fruit, salad or vegetable and choice of milk.

We now offer a breakfast program. Please see the attached letter for more information. Should you not want to take advantage of the automated system described above, your child can purchase breakfast/lunch with cash:

Student Breakfast - \$2.30 Student Lunch - \$3.30 Milk - \$1.00 Student 2nd lunch - \$4.50

DATES TO REMEMBER:

September:

- 1 District Opening/Staff In-service/School's Closed for Students
- 2 Staff In-service/School's Closed for Students
- 3 First Day of School for Students
- 7 School's Closed
- 9 Back to School Night beginning at 6:30 p.m.
- 11 Patriot Day / Wear red, white and blue / 4-Hour Session Day
- 16 Board of Education Meeting / Public Session Begins at 7:15 p.m.
- 21 School's Closed
- 23 Picture Day

October:

- 12 Staff In-service/School's Closed for Students
- 14 4-Hour Session Day / Parent-Teacher Conferences /
Board of Education Meeting / Public Session Begins at 7:15 p.m.
- 15 4-Hour Session Day / Parent-Teacher Conferences /
Brookside Evening Conferences
- 16 4-Hour Session for Staff and Students
- 27 PTA Book Fair
- 28 PTA Book Fair
- 30 Halloween Class Celebrations

November:

- 3 School's Closed
- 5-6 School's Closed
- 10 Make up Picture Day and Group Pictures
- 11 Staff In-service / School's Closed for Students
- 13 Marking Period 1 Ends
- 16-20 American Education Week
- 18 Board of Education Meeting / Public Session Begins at 7:15 pm
- 25 4-Hour Session Day for Students and Staff
- 26-27 School's Closed

PLEASE NOTE: On 4-Hour session days, dismissal is at 1:05 p.m. and no lunch is served.