Colonial Elementary School

Student and Family Handbook

2026/27

"Where the Friends Are"

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Dear Colonial Families,

It is with great joy that I welcome you to another wonderful year at Colonial. I feel truly privileged to serve as principal of a school filled with curious, energetic students, dedicated staff, and a supportive network of families.

At Colonial, we are committed to providing an enriching and meaningful learning experience for every child. Central to this mission is our focus on belonging and community. Through our **PAWS Pledge**, which highlights our Colonial values and expected behaviors, we work together to create a school environment where everyone feels safe, valued, and part of our school family.

We envision Colonial as a place where learning is exciting, growth is celebrated, and strong partnerships between students, parents, and staff help every child reach their full potential. Families play a vital role in this partnership, and we warmly encourage you to engage with our school community, whether through volunteering, joining the PTA, or participating in the Site-Based Council. Your involvement enriches the experience not just for your child, but for all our students.

This handbook, developed in collaboration with our PTA and Site-Based Council, is designed to guide you through the year. It contains important information about our school routines, policies, and resources, and we hope it will be a helpful reference for you and your family.

We are excited about the year ahead and all the opportunities it brings. Thank you for being part of the Colonial School family! We are so glad you are here!

Best,

Dr. Rachael Garcia
Principal, Colonial School

September 2026

Welcome Back, Colonial!



On behalf of the Colonial Elementary School Parent Teacher Association, welcome to the 2026-2027 school year. Whether you are a returning family or brand new to our school, we are so glad you are here and part of our community!

Our PTA is about connection and inclusion with the goal of strengthening our school and community. We support our dedicated teachers and staff to plan and facilitate programming that enriches students academically, socially and emotionally. We plan events outside of school hours where families can build and celebrate community. We identify ways to recognize our administration, teachers and staff to ensure they know how much we appreciate them. We unite to fundraise.

I hope you can be involved in whatever way is available to you and your family. Whether it's a leadership role, joining a committee, volunteering for events, attending meetings or sharing new ideas - you are welcome here and there is a place for you. Please never hesitate to reach out to me directly. I look forward to collaborating with all of you as part of our PTA and Colonial community.

Sincerely,

Concetta Eudicone
2026-2027 Colonial PTA President
colonialptapresident@gmail.com

Mission Statement

Colonial strives to create a nurturing and supportive environment that celebrates diversity, inclusion and emphasizes respect. We prepare our students to become life-long learners and responsible citizens, while enhancing their understanding of the world around them.

Community Norms and Expectations

We believe that students thrive in an environment where the adult members of the community support the mission of the school and adhere to norms related to respectful, productive interactions and communication. As such, Colonial community members are expected to:

- Support the mission of the school.
- Support the growth of a positive community by being inclusive and embracing diversity.
- Communicate openly, respectfully, and constructively with others, recognizing that healthy communication begins with open and respectful interaction and that many matters are best handled on an individual or personal basis via phone or email, and not via public forums such as social media.
- Model respectful, kind, and inclusive behavior for both children and adults.
- Embrace lifelong learning and support others in their continued intellectual curiosity.
- Support the school through active engagement, volunteerism, and philanthropy according to one's situation.
- Commit to reading and responding to communication from the school.
- Adhere to community rules and safety measures.
- Support the District's mission to provide educational equity across all four of Pelham's elementary schools.

Diversity Statement

Diversity is integral to the educational mission of Colonial Elementary School. Ideally, in the course of learning, our students will encounter a rich profusion of diversity. Diversity at Colonial includes the thoughts and worldviews, identities and affiliations, aptitudes and aspirations, races and cultures, genders and sexualities, and experiences and economic status of our students, families, faculty, administrators, and staff. Through their engagement with diversity, students will gain the preparation they need to live and lead in a complex world and serve as responsible members of their community.

Standards of Behavior

Introduction

As members of the Colonial community, we believe that the standards governing our participation and behavior within Colonial should be clearly stated, reasonable and aligned with our mission. We, the students, faculty, administration, staff and families, commit to respecting and showing concern for:

> one another and for oneself
> shared spaces and materials
> the academic, social and moral life of the school.

The Paws Pledge

As students mature and move from more supervision and structure in the lower grades to greater freedom in the middle and high schools, it is also recognized that greater responsibility accompanies such freedom. The Paws Pledge, Colonial's community agreement, follows these standards and specifies the behavioral expectations for the Colonial community .

The PAWS pledge:

P – Pay Attention
A – Always be prepared
W – Work and Act Responsibly
S – Show respect

And remember to be a cougar with character.

Students who consistently follow established rules are happier children because they feel safe. In a school community, consistent expectations for behavior followed by students, parents and caregivers, faculty, and staff:

> create a sense of order and predictability
> create a climate of respect
> create an environment where children can take risks and learn from mistakes
> create an environment where children encourage the best in each other
> serve as guidelines for behavior to help children learn self-regulation

The goal of the Paws Pledge is to create an atmosphere of learning in an environment that values safety, responsibility, and civility, while taking into consideration the developmental stages of our students. In addition, we hope to provide experiences for our students to learn how to be global citizens.

In the classroom, the Paws Pledge is a tool for teachers to support positive behavior. By using these expectations, teachers can work with students to determine what these expectations mean, not only in their classroom, but also in the larger community. This statement provides a shared language that reflects our goals for all individuals in our community. The Paws Pledge supports the home-school connection to create a clear understanding of what is expected at school, so parents and the school can work together to support children to make good choices. Kind, thoughtful, and responsible members of the community recognize that there are important expectations to follow and agree to adhere to the policies outlined in this handbook.

All students are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner in accordance with the District's Code of Conduct. This includes proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, personnel, other members of the school community, and facilities and equipment.

The District's Code of Conduct is available here.

Dignity for All Students Act

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation are serious and will not be tolerated in the Pelham Union Free School District. In each of its schools, the District has designated at least one employee to serve as a Coordinator to implement the Dignity For All Students Act (DASA), which took effect July 1, 2012. In accordance with the regulations of the Commissioner of Education, each Dignity Act Coordinator has been thoroughly trained in the following areas: human relations; harassment, bullying, and

discrimination; and exclusion, bias, and aggression in the educational setting. The Dignity Act Coordinators are charged with coordinating and enforcing the requirements of the Dignity for All Students Act and its implementing regulations and policies.

Any student victim, parent (person in parental relation) of a student victim, close adult relative of a student victim, or school staff member who wishes to report an incident of alleged bullying, harassment, or intimidation, should complete the DASA Report form found on the District website and return it to the school Dignity Act Coordinator at the student/victim's school.

Colonial's DASA Coordinator is Anna Murray, the school psychologist. More information about DASA and the DASA Coordinators are set forth in the District's Code of Conduct, available here.

Computing Policy

The District has an Acceptable Use Policy that all students must respect and follow. The full Acceptable Use Policy can be found on the District's Technology website (link below).

In addition, the District maintains a parent handbook with up to date information on everything from our use of the Infinite Campus Portal to our 1:1 Chromebook Initiative. To access it, please click on the link below. It is an interactive Google Doc with links to videos and other forms.

For more information on the District's Acceptable Use Policy and Parent Technology Handbook, as well as the District's Data Privacy Policy, and information about the Parent/Student Help Desk and K-5 Google Classroom, and contact information for the District's Data Protection Officer, please visit the Technology homepage here. The Acceptable Use Policy is available here.

Communication

Communicating with Teachers

Colonial teachers and staff are dedicated to open communication with their students' families. Communication preferences will be established with parents during our Open House in mid-September, if not earlier. There are two parent teacher conferences during the school year to formally speak about your child's progress and performance. Specific dates are set forth in the District

Calendar, available here.

Communications

There is no shortage of communication from the District and school. The District sends a weekly message, as well as additional announcements when notable events and news occur. Colonial's Principal sends out weekly communications. Both District and school communication will be shared via ParentSquare. Colonial's PTA also sends a weekly email called the Growl (see details below). If you are not receiving notifications, please advise the School Office to make sure it has your updated contact information.

There is also a private Colonial School PTA (Pelham) Facebook group that parents and caregivers can join for updates and conversation about school happenings.

The Growl

The Growl Newsletter is the official communication channel from the PTA to its members. The PTA has a dedicated communications team responsible for sending a weekly email (usually sent Sunday evenings) with information about school news and upcoming meetings and events, District news and events, community announcements and useful links to purchase spirit wear, District Calendar/website, school lunch menu, school newspapers, social media, etc.

In order to receive the Growl, families must register with Membership Toolkit (MTK)—see more information about MTK below. Registration is free, and ensures that your family will be included in the Colonial directory. All families that register with MTK will automatically receive the GROWL. Access to the Colonial directory is reserved to families that have paid their PTA dues.

Snow/Emergency Closing Communications

Sometimes the start of the school day is delayed or school is closed due to inclement weather. Decisions about school closings are made as early as possible and take into consideration the safety of the students and staff. Should severe weather force us to close school, the District issues text notifications and an automated emergency call system to notify each household based upon parent/guardian contact information provided to the District. At the beginning of each school year, the school distributes forms to ensure that accurate contact information, and your preferred communication channels, are on file. Please contact the School Office school should these change during the academic year. In addition, please check the website at: www.pelhamschools.org for current information or television station: Channel 12 TV or radio stations: WINS (1010am), WVOX

(1460am), WFAS (103.9fm)

Academic Communication

Open House Night for Parents and Caregivers

Open House Night is an opportunity for teachers to share their curriculum and classroom procedures to give parents and caregivers a sense of what their child's classroom life is like. It also allows parents to begin to get to know the teachers, administrators and staff who are very important in your child's life.Open House Night follows a time schedule, and we urge you to attend for the entire time. **(Open House Night is for parents and primary caregivers only).**

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conference days are scheduled twice a year for students in Kindergarten through Fifth grades. Details to sign-up for a specific time slot are sent home by your child's teacher. Special area teachers are also available to meet on conference days. Additional conferences may also be scheduled whenever parents or teachers have a concern they wish to discuss.

In addition to specified conference days, we encourage informal talks. Parents should feel free to email teachers for the purpose of scheduling meetings to discuss student progress or concerns. Teachers appreciate knowing about any major changes at home that may affect a child's behavior or attitude, such as the birth of a sibling, the serious illness of a family member, or a parent out-of-town. Parents should call the school office with respect to any same-day communication with the teacher (for example, to notify the teacher about a change in pick-up arrangements) as teachers do not regularly check email during the day.

With respect to points of escalation, parents and caregivers should adhere to the District guidelines available here.

Home-School Connection

Colonial PTA

The Colonial School PTA is committed to working closely with families, teachers and community leaders to enrich the learning experience for our students. As a member organization of the New York State and National PTAs, our hope is to be a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for

families and communities, and a strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.

Almost all non-academic programming and events at Colonial are organized and led by the PTA. School fundraising, diversity programming and education, cultural events programming, spirit wear and more all fall under the umbrella of the PTA. Some of the PTA's most popular activities include the Welcome Back Picnic, Pasta Night, Book Fair, Building Bridges, Spelling Bee, and Read-a-thon. The PTA also manages Membership Toolkit, the online portal with the school directory that provides sign-ups and information about school events and activities.

Colonial's PTA is made up of volunteer parents and caregivers who pool their talents to provide practical support for our school. The PTA is led by an Executive Committee that is elected at the final PTA meeting of the preceding academic year. The Executive Committee consists of a President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer and VP of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Additionally, there are plenty of roles available for parents interested in chairing specific programs, events, and initiatives. There are also one-off volunteer opportunities and ways to get involved throughout the school year. ***EVERYONE is welcome (and encouraged!) to join the PTA***.

All parents and caregivers, including those that don't have the time to volunteer, are encouraged to join the monthly PTA meeting (held virtually) to get the latest scoop on planned activities and events. The monthly meetings are usually held virtually on the first Tuesday of the month. A link to join the monthly call is distributed in the weekly Growl newsletter.

To sign up to be a part of the Colonial PTA, visit Membership Toolkit, and to learn more, contact colonialptapresident@gmail.com.

2026-2027 Colonial PTA Executive Committee

President: Concetta Eudicone

President-Elect: Melissa Brice Shea

Secretary: Andra Troy

Treasurer: Ashley Ranieri

IDEAS Committee: Pam Shaw, Louisa Revitte, Gina Gottlieb

Green Committee: Madeline Tully and Greg Spock

Class Parents

A unique opportunity to be involved with your child's classroom and the PTA is by volunteering to be a Class Parent. Each teacher relies on their Class Parents in different ways, however, serving as Class Parent is a great opportunity to get to know your child's teacher and get involved with the PTA in a way that directly impacts your child's experience. Class parent responsibilities include coordinating their class/grade's community service activity, assisting with class parties, and managing class funds/teacher gifts. Interested parents should sign up to be Class Parent at the beginning of the academic year on Membership Toolkit.

Membership Toolkit

Membership Toolkit (MTK) is an online portal that is managed by the PTA and contains a school directory (with names of students and families who have opted to be listed in such directory) as well as information and sign-ups for school events and activities. The PTA "store" with Colonial spiritwear is also on MTK. MTK can be accessed online here although a handy App is also available for download on your mobile device.

Access to MTK is free, and all Colonial families can opt-in to be listed in the MTK directory. The weekly Growl newsletter is distributed using the contact information listed in the MTK directory. *Note, however, that access to the MTK directory is only available to families that have paid PTA dues.

SEPTA

Pelham's Special Education Parent-Teacher Association (SEPTA) is a district-wide organization of parents, administrators, and teaching staff, dedicated to the support and education of families with exceptional children. **All are welcome to join!**

SEPTA provides parent education through workshops and evening events, and works with parents, teachers, and administrators to help provide the best opportunities possible for all students. Parents and caregivers may contact SEPTA to:

- Ask questions and get feedback about the CPSE or CSE process, 504 plans, and building level services
- Get referrals and ideas about area therapists and resources
- Meet other parents and caregivers who are experiencing similar issues for support or advice
- Attend educational workshops and support groups on a wide range of topics specific to special needs and learning differences

- Help promote inclusion at Colonial and the Pelham community.

For more information, please visit the SEPTA website available here.

Site Based Council

Each school in the District has a site-based council made up of parent and teacher representatives who work in collaboration with their building principal. The goal of the site-based team is to advise on issues pertinent to student culture and achievement, including hiring of faculty, specialized programming, and scheduling. At Colonial Elementary School, the Site Based Council is made up of the principal, three parents, and three teachers, each serving a two-year term. The parent representatives are nominated by the PTA Executive Board. The team meets once monthly. Each meeting includes time for public comment, and members of the larger school community are welcome to address the Site Based Council with suggestions, questions or concerns.

The Colonial Program

The academic curriculum runs on a 6-day cycle. Each class is staffed by one classroom teacher, and special area classes include Art, Library, Music, Physical Education, and FLES (Spanish). Classroom and special area teachers frequently collaborate on multi-disciplinary projects that integrate learning in several subject areas.

Curriculum Enrichment

Colonial students have opportunities to participate in orchestra, band, student government, a variety of field trips, and in-school workshops/residencies. Some of the programs that extend beyond the classroom include:

The Colonial Times

The student newspaper is open to any student in 4th or 5th grade and they meet after school once a week. They publish online and a print edition two times a year. The paper is run by Ms. Agostino. Check out the Colonial Times!

Orchestra/Band

Orchestra starts in 3rd grade and Band in 4th grade. Lessons are free and take place once in each 6-day cycle. Students can choose an instrument to play and there are two recitals per year.

The orchestra teacher is Ms. Marcia Bean (mbean@pelhamschools.org) and the band teacher is Mr. Andrew Dolgon (adolgon@pelhamschools.org). Students can opt to participate in both band and orchestra.

24 Club

Ms. Salerno runs an after-school club where kids play the math game "24." She also runs 24 competitions for club members. Email Ms. Salerno at jsalerno@pelhamschools.org for more information!

Student Government

Colonial has had an active student government. It is facilitated by a staff member and historically included Fourth and Fifth Grade class representatives. Over the years they have raised money for charities, collected food for food banks, and honored staff members throughout the year.

Perennial Math

Perennial Math is a program available to students in grades 3, 4 and 5 that is designed to improve problem solving abilities by developing students' reading, reasoning and logical skills by giving students an opportunity to compete in four Perennial Math tests. The program runs Jan-April, and students meet once a month for practice sessions as well as tests. All students receive certificates for participating and special awards will be presented to individual students who score well compared to students around the world.

Special Area Classes

All Pelham schools are on a 6 Day Cycle. The cycle day is noted on the detailed District Calendar in the lower corner of each date (available here) as well as the digital calendar (see note below to sync to the digital calendar). Within each cycle, students enjoy the following programs:

Grade	Art	Library	General Music	P.E.	FLES
Kindergarten	1x/cycle	1x/cycle	1x/cycle	2x/cycle	
1st grade	1x/cycle	1x/cycle	1x/cycle	2x/cycle	
2nd grade	1x/cycle	*	1x/cycle	2x/cycle	2x/cycle
3rd grade	1x/cycle	*	1x/cycle	2x/cycle	2x/cycle
4th grade	1x/cycle	*	1x/cycle	2x/cycle	2x/cycle
5th grade	1x/cycle	*	1x/cycle	2x/cycle	2x/cycle

*Grades 2-5 will have time slots for checking out books, and their library program will be integrated in their curriculum.

→ ***Pro tip: Syncing to the District Calendar***

In addition to the detailed and single-page (PDF) iterations of the District Calendar that can be found on the District's website (here), the District maintains a digital version of the District Calendar that can be synced to your online calendar, such as Google, Apple or Outlook. To sync the calendar, visit the calendar page on the District's website and click the Feed icon ( ). A window will pop up and give you the option to select different calendars you wish to sync. Click the iCal button next to Colonial's calendar and copy the link. You can subscribe to the calendar(s) by pasting the link into your email client.

Report Cards

Colonial uses a Standards Based Report Card to measure student growth over the course of a school year in grades K-5. Students receive report cards three times a year–in November, March and June. Report cards can be accessed through the Infinite Campus Portal.

Academic Screenings

All incoming Kindergarten children are screened to provide the school with preliminary information about each child's strengths and needs as the school prepares for their kindergarten experience. The school uses the information from the screening, along with parent and preschool questionnaires to best create classes for the fall. In addition, all Colonial students are screened three times during the year with an informal reading assessment to determine how students perform according to grade level benchmarks. These assessment data are used to inform instruction in the areas of fluency, decoding, and comprehension.

Homework Guidelines

Homework reinforces skills learned at school by providing independent practice at home. It can also serve as an important vehicle for communication between the home and school, helping families to understand the learning that is happening in class. The District has a Homework Policy for K-5 that can be found here.

Homework Expectations for All

Students: Homework should represent a student's best work. It will be completed with care and demonstrate student responsibility. It is expected that homework is completed and returned to school on time.

Teachers: Purposeful homework will be assigned to reinforce daily lessons and practice previously taught skills. Homework may be modified when taking into account student readiness. Homework expectations will be communicated to students and parents at the beginning of the school year.

Parents: Homework should be completed by the student with independence. Parents should communicate to the teacher via a note or email if a child needs extra support with the homework or if he/she is unable to complete the homework. As our school partners, parents will create and establish homework routines including a time and place to complete homework.

Nightly Reading

Reading provides students a number of significant benefits including improved concentration, vocabulary, language skills, and empathy. Reading teaches children about the world around them, providing mirrors to see themselves and windows to learn about others. Most importantly, reading is fun and a wonderful way to spend special time together!

K-2 students are expected to read independently (or be read to) for a minimum of 20 minutes at home each day. Students in Grades 3 through 5 should be reading independently for a minimum of 30 minutes a day. Of course, we encourage your child to read, read, read as much as possible!

Homework Time

Homework is generally assigned on Monday through Thursday nights. Below are recommended nightly assignment completion times on average. Let your child's teacher know if homework is taking your child much longer than these recommendations. Homework is intended to reinforce classroom instruction, not cause frustration.

Grade	Nightly Homework Assignment Time (on average)
K	Individualized /20 minutes
1	30 minutes
2	45 minutes
3	45-60 minutes
4	60 minutes
5	60-75 minutes

**Approximately half of the time listed should be devoted to nightly reading, however we encourage our students to read as much as possible!!

New York Assessments

Standardized testing provides one measure of student performance. Results of standardized tests are used to help teachers identify areas of instruction and curriculum to be reviewed closely. New York State tests in English Language Arts and Mathematics are administered to students in grades 3, 4 and 5.

The School Day

School doors open at 8:15 am, the late bell rings at 8:25am, and instruction commences at 8:30am. Please note that the playground is not supervised prior to 8:15 am. Under no circumstance should students be left unattended prior to 8:15 am. We ask for family and students' cooperation in making the start of each school day as smooth, safe and peaceful as possible.

Attendance

When a student will be absent from school, the student's parent or guardian should contact the main office before 8:30am by calling (914) 738-2680 and emailing the teacher, main office and the school

nurse (dmccarthy@pelhamschools.org). If the Colonial Main Office does not receive notification of a student's absence before 8:30am, the school nurse or other representative will contact the student's parents or guardians by phone and/or email. As mandated by New York State, a student's guardian will be contacted if a child is excessively tardy or absent.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival

> School doors open at **8:15am**, at which time the first bell is rung. At **8:25am**, the late bell rings and school officially begins. Classes and morning instruction begin promptly at **8:30am**.

> Teachers arrive between 8:15 and 8:20, organize each classroom, and lead them inside.

- **Grades K and 2 line up through the Pelhamdale Avenue playground entrance.**
- **Grade 1 lines up in the lower playground, and enters the building through the lower level near the Art Room.**
- **Grades 3 and K-2R enters through the South Entrance**
- **Grades 4 and 5 enter through the main entrance on Highbrook Avenue.**

> Any student arriving after 8:30am must enter the school through the main entrance on Highbrook Avenue and will be marked Tardy.

Dismissal

> Dismissal time is at **3:05pm**. Students are dismissed through the same entrance that they arrived (K-2 in the back; 3-5 from the main entrance). Students in grades K-2 are only dismissed to a designated guardian. Students in Grades 3-5 that wish to walk home independently (known as "walkers") may be dismissed without a guardian if a permission slip is on file with the school.

Arrival and Pick-up By Car

There is a designated drop zone in front of the school on Highbrook Ave that is recommended for students in all grades. Parents dropping off their child(ren) are advised to pull forward to the end of the drop zone directly in front of the school entrance, wait in the car until someone opens the car door to help their child(ren) unload, and then quickly but carefully exit the drop zone. There is no parking, stopping or standing on Highbrook from Boulevard to the cones. Children may only exit the vehicle on the sidewalk side of the car.

Drop-off on Pelhamdale Ave in the back if the school is only permitted on the northbound side

closest to the playground—again, you must drop-off quickly and carefully exit. (Traffic on Pelhamdale Avenue is not restricted to school traffic so drop off in this area is less recommended.)

Parking

Parking for drop-off and pick-up is available on each of Highbrook and Pelhamdale Avenues one block north of the school, on Boulevard, and on Irving Place. **You cannot park and leave your car immediately in front of or behind the school. Please do not park in the spots across the street from the playground as our teachers depend on those spots for parking or in the Business Office Driveway.**

No Idling

Idling as you wait to drop-off or pick up is illegal. Students and neighbors get dosed with fumes, and in general it's just a bad environmental move. Please do not idle.

Walking

Our lovely town was designed for walking, and there is perhaps no finer sight than seeing a steady stream of Cougars marching to school in the morning, eager to learn and definitely never whining. Crossing guards are strategically deployed at major intersections—make sure you say hello!

Biking

Children in grades 3-5 who have their parent's permission may ride their bicycles/scooters to school. Bicycle racks are provided on the lower playground and by the south entrance on Highbrook. Students are responsible for locking their bikes. Helmets must be worn. Students may not ride their bicycles and scooters on school property.

Late Arrival Policy

Arriving at school on time helps students develop good learning habits and provides children an opportunity to transition from home to their daily school routine. It is important that children have time to settle into their classroom, check-in with their friends and teachers, and care for their belongings. Children who are late miss out on this important part of the morning routine. We ask for your help in getting your child to school on time.

Teachers greet their classes in designated locations and bring them into the building by 8:20am. Morning instruction begins at 8:30 am. ***Any student that arrives after 8:30 am must enter through the main entrance of the school (on Highbrook).*** The back gate will be locked.

Early Dismissal Policy

If a student has to leave school early, a note must be sent to the teacher or main office in advance. For safety, the school will dismiss students only to their parents, or to a person authorized by the parent and known to the school (caregiver, grandparent, etc.) who will sign the child out with the greeter. Under no circumstances may a child leave the school alone.

There is a Student Sign-In/Sign-Out Log in the main office. Students must sign in and out when:

> Arriving after 8:30 am
> Leaving before 3:05pm

All parents, guardians, and caretakers should meet their child(ren) at the Greeter's Station (Mr. Raggo) for early dismissals and pick-ups.

Early Release

The academic calendar typically includes a few "Early Release" days which are designed to afford teachers and staff with professional development opportunities. On Early Release days, the dismissal procedures will be followed for either a 12pm dismissal or a 1pm dismissal. Please note:

- 12pm Dismissals- Lunch is not served
- 1pm Dismissals- Lunch is served

It is common during the school year for the dates, times and places of events to change or for additional events to be added. As changes are made, the District will update the detailed, single-page/PDF iterations of the District Calendar that is posted to the website here as well as the digital calendar. If relying on the website iterations, it is important to check back periodically to see what has changed.

Lunch, Snack and Recess

Colonial students eat a snack in their classroom. Please pack a nutritious snack for your child daily. All classrooms are **nut free**. Teachers will advise of any foods that may be prohibited in the classroom due to allergies.

Lunch/recess is a full hour each day from **12:00 pm - 1:00pm**. Due to building constraints, the school is split into groups for lunch/recess. Students in K-3rd grade eat lunch in the gym, while Fourth and

Fifth Grade students eat lunch outside at the PMS fields. (In the event of inclement weather, students eat at their desk.) Students are permitted to leave the building for lunch when a parent or guardian has signed them out of the building/back into the building following the late arrival/early dismissal policy above. A student that leaves for lunch cannot be brought back to the school building until the end of the lunch hour.

School lunch is available for purchase every day through Whitsons. More information about Food Services, including details on free and reduced meals, can be found on the District's Food Services webpage available here. The daily lunch menu can be accessed from the Colonial website's homepage at: https://colonial.pelhamschools.org/

Recess happens daily for all Colonial students. Colonial students go outdoors throughout the year, so please make sure your child is dressed for the weather every day. The lunch hour includes thirty minutes of lunchtime and thirty minutes of recess. In addition, teachers employ a variety of methods to give children brain breaks, such as dancing along to GoNoodle clips that get children up and moving.

Recommended Attire

Students should wear clothing that will allow them to fully participate in the school day.

- Appropriate clothing for the weather: winter gear should include hats, gloves, scarves, winter jacket, snow pants, and snow boots
- Gym shoes for PE days (though sneakers are always a good idea, since activity is encouraged in the classroom and at recess everyday).
- Children often get dirty playing and learning at school so please have your child dress accordingly.
- Please be sure to label anything that comes into school including jackets, lunchboxes, water bottles - with your child's name and class to ensure that it is returned to your child instead of sitting in Lost and Found.

Lockers

Classrooms have student lockers assigned by the homeroom teacher to store personal belongings such as backpacks, lunches and extra clothes. It is the student's responsibility to keep their lockers clean. Lockers do not have locks, and students may not bring in personal locks.

Safety and Security

Building Access

Entrances to the building are open during arrival and dismissal times, and accessible during normal building hours with an appointment and proper identification. All visitors must enter through the main entrance and obtain a visitor pass from the security desk.

Before and After School Hours (supervision of students when school is not in session)

All classroom doors open by 8:15 am. Colonial students begin classes at 8:30 am. Children may play before or after school in the Colonial playground provided that they **must** be supervised by an adult at all times. **There is no supervision for students prior to 8:15am, so please do not drop students off before then.**

Children are not allowed to remain after school unsupervised. They must leave the school at the close of the school day or be enrolled in a specific program.

Lost and Found

A lost and found is set up outside when there's a need for it. Otherwise, families with missing items can contact the school secretary. Please be sure to label anything that comes into school - jackets, lunchboxes, water bottles - with your child's name and class to ensure that it is returned to your child instead of sitting in Lost and Found.

Fire & Safety Drills

In accordance with state law, the school conducts fire, lockout and lockdown drills on a regular basis. A flashing blue light at the front or rear of the building indicates that the building is in lockout or lockdown (either in a drill or otherwise). While the drill is underway, school phones are not answered and the doors will not be responded to when the bells are pressed. Exterior blue lights at the school's exterior doors will be flashing indicating that you should not come near the building. Parents are notified of any building emergency and at the start and conclusion of a lockout or lockdown drill. All communications regarding Fire and Safety Drills will be sent via Parentsquare. More information can be found in the District's Safety Plan, available here.

Student Services, Health, and Wellness

The District's Pupil Personnel Services department strives to provide balanced support for every student to ensure equal access to the general education curriculum while addressing the whole student. Academic, health, social and emotional needs all fall within Pupil Personnel Services. The District's goal is to foster growth and independence in the academic, social and emotional domains for all students. Comments, questions and communications initiated from our families are always welcome as we value your participation and collaboration in supporting our students.

The District strives to make the Pupil Personnel Services Suite a welcoming and supportive place. Services that are offered include speech, OT, and other related services. Anyone who has concerns about their child potentially having disabilities should always start with the classroom teacher, and then the principal. Depending on the concerns, there are building-level services when warranted whether it be academics or other areas. Parents are also welcome to reach out to Dr. Ribeiro (contact below) if they have questions about making a referral for services or programs.

Please visit the District's website to learn more about the staff, programs, services, and other important information about Pupil Personnel Services here.

School Nurse

Colonial's school nurse is committed to providing your child with the highest level of care possible and values a proactive approach to overall student wellness. Our goal is to assist and care for all students with any health related issues so they may enjoy and get the most from their educational experience. To that end, the school-parent partnership is vital. Please be sure to communicate any important information regarding your child's medical condition(s) and/or medication(s) directly to Denise McCarthy, Colonial's school nurse at **dmccarthy@pelhamschools.org or 914-738-2680 ext. 1504.** Please make sure Mrs. McCarthy has an updated health form on file for your child. These can be updated and submitted annually following your child's well visit.

Student Health Forms

Additional information, including immunization requirements and Emergency Care Plan forms are available on the District website at https://www.pelhamschools.org/teaching-and-learning/health

Illness

In the event your child is absent from school, you must notify the school nurse. If your child has a contagious illness, it is appropriate to inform the school nurse. If your child has a temperature of greater than 100.0 in the previous 24 hours he/she needs to stay home. They can return to school after being fever free for 24 hours ***without the help of fever reducers***.

Administering Medications in School

In order for a school nurse to administer medication(s), NYS law requires that each student have a patient-specific order from a licensed prescriber and written parent/guardian permission for any prescription or over the counter medication, including topicals (i.e. ointment, Calamine lotion, Benadryl, skin lotions, Vaseline, etc.). All medications (prescription and over the counter) must adhere to these guidelines and must be brought in by a parent in the original container.

Additional permission is required for those students who request permission to carry their own medication on campus. Please contact Colonial's school nurse directly. Additional information is available on the District website at: https://www.pelhamschools.org/teaching-and-learning/health

Medical Emergencies

If a serious medical emergency occurs at school, the school will call parents or the emergency contact person. If we are unable to contact someone, we will take the child by ambulance to the nearest emergency room. In the meantime, school personnel will continue their attempts to reach parents and emergency contacts.

Student Support During Medical Leaves

Depending on the nature and duration of a student's Medical Leave, they may need to take steps toward acquiring specific content knowledge and/or developing specific skills which were a part of the course(s) in which they were not a full participant. The school may consider a range of potential options to support students.

In addition, the student and their parent/guardian will need to have a meeting with the school administration and the school counselor prior to returning in order to ensure a successful transition back to school.

School/Parent communication

It is vital for families to discuss individual student allergy plans with the student's teacher and school nurse.

Traditions and Events

School Spirit

Colonial is not lacking in spirit! The Paws Pledge is recited every morning as part of daily announcements. Fridays are Spirit Days. The PTA sells spiritwear through Membership Toolkit and in person at school events.

Town Halls

Assemblies are formal gatherings that have a special focus or theme and might include special performers or speakers from outside the Colonial community. Examples of Town Halls include special author visits, and other special guest speakers or cultural group performances.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are celebrated in student homerooms, according to the tradition of that particular classroom. As a school, we want to continue recognizing our students' special day while being sensitive to our District Wellness Policy, student medical issues, and our school and district commitment to equity and access and creating a community of inclusiveness. **Therefore, all elementary schools will be replacing edible treats with non-food celebrations.** Any questions or suggestions regarding celebrations should be coordinated with your individual teacher.

Gifts of Appreciation to Teachers and Staff

The Colonial community values exhibiting kindness. While not an expectation, the act of recognizing a teacher or staff with a modest gift by students, families, and friends is welcomed. The District has a policy that teachers and employees are not allowed to accept any single gift in excess of $75. This policy applies to both collective gifts (gifts collected by the Class Parents and presented on behalf of the entire class) and individual gifts given on behalf of a single student or family. There is no overall cap on the number of gifts a teacher is allowed to receive, just a policy that each gift stay under the $75 cap. Gifts are traditionally given at the holidays, Teacher Appreciation Week, and at the end of the school year. Class Parents (through the PTA) will usually arrange to provide a class gift to the teacher utilizing class funds.

Grade-Level Service Projects

To build community and encourage a commitment to service, each grade takes part in a project designed to engage the entire grade and give back to the school/surrounding community. These projects can vary year-to-year, and are facilitated by the PTA and class parents with the support of teachers and Ms. Garcia.

5th Grade Traditions

Colonial Fifth Graders are celebrated all year long with a variety of field trips and full-grade experiences. In the Spring, Fifth Graders usually participate in a District-wide Field Day with the Fifth Graders from the other three Pelham elementary schools. It is a great way to start to get to know kids from other schools as they get ready for middle school. Other events that prepare them to move on to PMS usually include visits from guidance counselors, a PMS tour and Q&A with 6th graders about what to expect.

The school arranges a "Moving Up" ceremony that will be followed by a special celebration for all students and their families. Funds raised throughout the year are used for this party, plus a donation gift from the PTA. The students' costs are usually covered and families pay for any other attendees.

Pasta Night

Pasta Night is a 5th grade fundraiser event for the whole school to attend on the Colonial playground. It usually occurs in early spring and includes a pasta dinner, catered by a local restaurant, served by the 5th grade class. There is a DJ/dancing and silent auction/raffle. Typical auction items include lunch with your teacher, principal for a day, funny teacher challenges and activities. The raffle items are donated toys/activities, numbers are called by the DJ and students go pick their prize. It is a student favorite!

Welcome Back Picnic

The Colonial school year kicks off with a "Welcome Back Picnic" each September. This is generally held within the first few weeks of school starting on a Friday evening at Prospect Hill Playground. While the details change from year-to-year, families enjoy a casual dinner, DJ and dancing, raffle, Spirit Wear sales, and more. The Welcome Back Picnic is hosted by the PTA.

Field Trips

Field trips are an integral part of the Colonial program. They may take the form of outings to museums, zoos, theaters, service opportunities, or simply a walk around town. These trips enhance

studies that take place within the walls of the school by providing a level of authenticity and "real life" experiences that cannot be replicated in classrooms.

Field trips change year to year, taking into account many factors including changes to curriculum and venue availability.

Holidays
As part of our program of learning about each other and the world, we welcome families into the classrooms to share important celebrations and holidays that they observe. Our DEI committee works tirelessly to ensure that all cultures and traditions are celebrated at Colonial. If your family has a cultural celebration or tradition you'd like to share, don't hesitate to reach out to colonialptapresident@gmail.com

Book Fair

Colonial celebrates reading at the PTA's annual book fair every fall. Traditionally, Colonial's library is converted into a "pop-up" bookstore that invites students and parents to explore the shelves to find the next book on their reading lists or that perfect gift. As one of the PTA's fundraising events, the fair not only helps to raise funds but also cements the power and importance of reading in our community.

Building Bridges

Colonial students across all grades benefit from an annual training and learning experience called "Building Bridges: Understanding People with Different Abilities," designed to encourage empathy and understanding amongst our students. Brought to the school in 2019 by Colonial mom Ashley Matts, the program allows children to experience first-hand what it feels like to live with disabilities through engaging, interactive classroom activities. Classroom workshops are followed up with a series of speakers who have real-life experience with the disability that each grade has covered. Students from K-5 learn about vision impairment, hearing impairment, autism, physical and motor impairments, and learning differences.

Community Resources

Pelham Children's Center

We are excited to share that beginning in September, the *Pelham Children's Center* will host their after-school program at Colonial! This partnership will provide families with a high-quality, nurturing after-care option that supports children's social, emotional, and academic growth, all in a familiar and safe school environment. We look forward to welcoming the PCC team to our school community and launching this wonderful resource for Colonial families.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Andre Richards, Director of the Before & After School Program, at pcapdirector@pelhamchildrenscenter.org

Playful Wonders

Afterschool enrichment programming is offered weekdays from 3-6pm at Siwanoy Elementary School through the organization Playful Wonders. Transportation from Colonial to Siwanoy is available. For more details, including fees and enrollment information, please visit:
http://www.playfulwonders.com/

Bridges of Pelham

Bridges of Pelham is a supportive and collaborative network of parents residing in Pelham and raising children of African descent. Through education, community involvement, advocacy and social events, we strive to create an environment that reflects and supports our children.

Bridges of Pelham is named after Ruby Bridges. Ruby Bridges was the first African-American child to desegregate the all-white William Frantz Elementary School in Louisiana during the New Orleans school desegregation crisis in 1960. We honor her and others like her because without the ones who came before us, we would not be here. Parents who are interested in Bridges of Pelham should check out their Facebook page and email bridgesofpelham@gmail.com for more information.

Pelham Recreation After-School Programming

Throughout the year, Pelham Rec offers a range of after-school activities at Colonial and the other elementary schools for all students to participate in. These include basketball, karate, tennis, soccer, golf, arts and crafts, and more. Pelham Rec sends out emails, and sends kids home from school with brochures on the programming at the start of each new session. For more information, visit https://www.pelhamrecreation.com/

Cub Scouts

Throughout its 40+ year history, the kids of Pelham Pack 1 have enjoyed uniquely rewarding experiences through hands-on activities and taking an active part in the community life of both our town and our country. Scouting is open to all boys and girls grades 1-5. If you have any interest in or questions about Cub Scouts, please email pelhampack1@gmail.com.

Girl Scouts

Come learn how to camp, paint, shoot an arrow, sew, manage money, advocate for yourself, make lifelong friends AND help lead your very own scouting experience! Join Pelham Girl Scouts! All girls K-12 are welcome to join us! Please reach out to the Pelhams Service Unit Manager, StephanieOtero21@gmail.com for more information.

This Handbook was created in collaboration with the Colonial PTA, Site Based Council, and administration, and is in alignment with District Board Policies. Nothing in this Handbook limits the District from taking any action that it deems to be in the best interests of the school, its students, and its faculty. This Handbook is for informational purposes only. The school always retains and exercises the right to make changes to the Handbook, which is not intended to be and does not constitute a legally enforceable contract within the meaning of the law.

Important Telephone Numbers

Colonial Office		914.738.2680
Rachael Garcia	Principal, Colonial	
	Colonial Secretary/Attendance	
Student Support		
Michele O'Neil	Academic Intervention Specialist	
Christina Dee	Resource Room Teacher	
Anna Marie Murray	School Psychologist	
Diana LaScalia	Speech Therapist	
Paola Gogliormella	Occupational Therapist	
Nurses Office		914.738.2680
Denise McCarthy, RN	School Nurse	
Administrative Offices		914.738.3434
Dr. Cheryl Champ	Superintendent	
Dr. Trisha Fitzgerald	Executive Director of Human Resources	
Dr. Claire Comerford	Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Personnel	
Mr. James Hricay	Assistant Superintendent of Business and Facilities	
Ms. Traci Holtz	Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Personnel	
Mr. Alex Wolff	Public Information Officer	