



The Village Bluebird

Fall Edition 2026

Dear Village School Families,

Our school year is off to a positive and productive start! Students are working hard and learning to practice Blazer's Beliefs each day. Please continue to reinforce goals and expectations at home including: respecting shared spaces, communicating kindness and acceptance, and staying in control of our bodies in school and on the buses.

October began with a schoolwide, PTA supported recognition of our Custodial Team for National Custodian Day. We are deeply grateful for everything they do to keep VES safe, clean, and welcoming! We also celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with engaging class lessons about various countries and important leaders. Special thanks to our VES family guests representing Costa Rica, Mexico and Venezuela for your presentations in our Spanish classes. We are also recognizing Disabilities Awareness through inclusive discussions and class read alouds such as *All the Way to the Top*, the story of eight-year-old Jennifer Keelan, who encouraged Congress to pass the Americans with Disabilities Act. What a trailblazer!

Villagers are currently participating in the *Week of Respect* with the theme, *Change the World with Kindness and Respect* in alignment with motivational assemblies with Mr. Jared Campbell! Students are also learning healthy device use habits in technology class in preparation for our upcoming *Digital Citizenship Week*. See more in the article below.

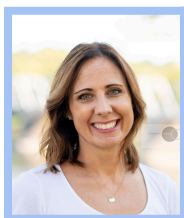
Looking ahead to November, we will shine a light on Indigenous Heritage and Voting Equity in support of our pillar of character, Citizenship. We will also come together as a school community for the Ruby Bridges Walk. In December we will highlight Human Rights as well as giving and service as we plan for our 32nd annual Young Scholars Institute service project. Please review this issue for additional information and updates about these activities, Parent-Teacher Conferences and more!

Thank you for your support and active involvement. Enjoy the fall season!

Ms. Susan Lacy, Principal



Mrs. Jessica Glover, Assistant Principal



October and November Spirit Days



Week of Respect: Change the World with Kindness and Respect

During the week of October 13-16, we celebrated the Week of Respect! Each day, students took part in morning meetings, discussions, and activities that highlight the importance of kindness and respect. We began the week by learning what respect looks and sounds like in our school community, then explored how to show respect for ourselves and others. Midweek, we focused on respecting diversity by celebrating the many unique qualities that make each of us special. Through these activities, students practiced the skills and attitudes that help build a caring, welcoming school environment.



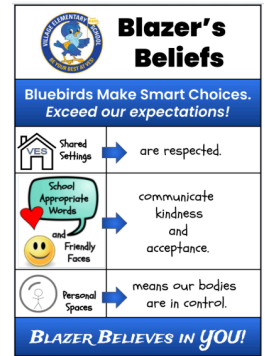
We were excited to welcome Jared Campbell to VES once again. Our students always enjoy Jared's lively songs about friendship, respect and kindness. The MHS Peer Leaders visited some of our classrooms to share lessons on respect. In addition, throughout the month, our school counselors are facilitating classroom lessons that focus on making sure we treat each other with respect and kind words so that everyone can feel safe and comfortable in school.

Thank you for furthering these discussions at home as we are always looking for students to show respect and compassion throughout the year for themselves and others, in our school and in our global community.

Mrs. Schantz and Mrs. Fornal, School Counselors

Blazer's Beliefs

As mentioned during Back to School Night, Ms. Lacy, Mrs. Glover and classroom teachers rolled out Blazer's Beliefs which is our Core Value system that includes Common Language and Consistent Behavioral Expectations. We are off to a great start this year with practicing Blazer's Beliefs. We have had several Blazer Blasts celebrating our successes and positive displays during lunch, recess, around our halls and during safety drills. Please review Blazer's Beliefs in our [School Handbook](#) and reinforce these expectations with your child to keep us flying through the school year.



Digital Citizenship Week - October 19 - 23



Each year during the third full week of October, Common Sense Media leads Digital Citizenship Week, an annual campaign to promote a healthy, balanced, and positive approach to media and tech use among young people. With artificial intelligence rapidly changing our digital landscape every day, it is more important now than ever for our students to think critically and evaluate what

they read and see online.

During the week of October 19th, Villagers will learn about building healthy habits around technology use through videos presented on the VES Afternoon News. Topics include balancing technology time with other activities, protecting your privacy, identifying and preventing cyberbullying, managing distractions and spotting fake news, and decoding media messages.

We look forward to seeing how students put this learning into practice so they can engage with technology in thoughtful, healthy ways. The VES and OHES technology teachers have also created an online book, [Being a Responsible Digital Citizen](#). This book contains activities, videos, and discussion questions that will help you start the conversations about being responsible online. We also recognize that sometimes the only time you have might be in the car, so we wanted to share [Common Sense Media Carpool Conversation Podcasts](#). These podcasts are under two minutes and will pose a question that will help guide a discussion and keep lines of communication open.

In order to foster meaningful relationships in school and on the bus, all technology is to remain at home. The use of cellphones and smartwatches in school and on the bus is not permitted as outlined in our VES Handbook.

Ms. Leimbacher, Technology Teacher

Schoolyard Habitat Certification

Village Elementary School is proud to share an exciting announcement! Both the Bluebird Garden and Dan's Memorial Garden are now officially Certified Schoolyard Wildlife Habitats through the National Wildlife Federation.

Last year, our third graders researched which native plants would thrive best in our school grounds. Thanks to a generous grant from our PTA, the chosen plants were purchased and students worked together in small groups to plant them.

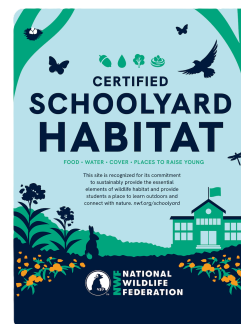
By the end of the summer, our gardens successfully met all four criteria required for certification by providing:

- **Food** through native, pollinator-friendly plants
- **Water** through dedicated birdbaths
- **Cover** to protect animals from weather and predators
- **Places** for local wildlife to raise their young

Thank you to our students, the PTA, and teachers who helped bring these gardens to life!

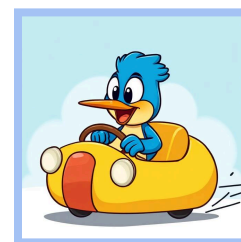
Mrs. Danielle Stewart, K-4 Mathematics and Science Supervisor

Mrs. Kate Dunham, Teacher



Parent/Guardian Drop Off and Important Safety Reminders

If you need to drive your student to school, please use the driveway on the right side of the school to travel to the **rear** entrance. **This entrance will open at 9:25 a.m. and closes at 9:35 a.m. Please do not drop your student off early as the doors will be locked until 9:25 and there is no supervision. Please have your student remain in the car until the doors are opened by our staff at 9:25.**



Please review the [School Handbook](#) for drop off and pick up details.

Halloween at VES



As Halloween approaches, we would like to inform you of upcoming activities in which your students are welcomed to participate. On Friday, October 30th, we will kick off the day with our annual Readers' Theater assemblies. VES students and staff will participate in fun and interactive large group read alouds.

Halloween class parties will be planned, facilitated and attended by room representatives and their designees only. Designated volunteers are required to check in at the front door sign-in station upon arrival. Your student's teacher and room representative will share additional details about classroom celebrations.

Costumes: Students may choose to wear a Halloween costume or VES/Monty spirit wear to school. If students choose to carry a costume to school, it must be quick and easy to change into and out of independently. All costumes must be:

- Comfortable and allow for normal movement on the bus, during the school day including gym and recess. Blow up costumes are difficult to manage at school.
- Free of props, masks, and weapons
- Respectful and appropriate for school

Alternative activities will be available for students not participating in Halloween activities. Just let your student's teacher know so we can plan accordingly. Thank you for your support and cooperation in making Halloween organized, safe, and fun for everyone!

Wear Purple for Our Ruby Bridges Walk

On Friday, November 13th, in collaboration with the Hopewell Regional School District, the Ruby Bridges Foundation and the Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association, Village School students will be participating in The Ruby Bridges Walk at school to commemorate Ruby Bridges' historic steps. In 1960, when, at only six-years old, she became one of the first Black children to integrate New Orleans' all white public school system. Our goal is for students to understand the past and use their voices to create a more peaceful, just and harmonious future.



Students will learn about Ruby Bridges and other young girls who integrated public schools including Mamie Tape, Sylvia Mendez and Alice Piper as well as Leona Tate, Gail Etienne, and

Tessie Prevost who did so just 10 minutes before Ruby Bridges in a neighboring town. The 1954 landmark US Supreme Court case, Brown vs. the Board of Education ruled that segregation of public schools is unconstitutional and was preceded by the New Jersey Supreme Court case, Hedgepeth and Williams vs. Board of Education which took place in nearby Trenton in 1944.

Students will also learn about showing bravery during challenging situations, being a welcoming friend and upstander for others and making a positive change in their community. We will start the day with a school meeting then walk from VES through part of Skillman Park. We will re-enter school together, challenging our students to enact change like Ruby, Alice, Sylvia, Mamie, Leona Gail and Tessie. We will be supported by special administrative and township guests. Our rain date will be November 17th. We will share more details as the date approaches.

Please be sure to sign the general Walking Permission provided by your student's classroom teacher!

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences are a chance for you to meet with your student's teacher(s) to discuss their participation, learning habits and progress thus far this school year. Conferences will take place on our early dismissal days, November 19-20, 23-24. Virtual conferences are encouraged. However, you may request an in-person conference by contacting your student's teacher. Please make sure to arrive on time so the schedule runs smoothly for all.



All conferences are scheduled through Genesis, parents/guardians will be able to do so via the Parent Portal beginning on Wednesday, November 4th at 10am. Please refer to [THESE](#) directions for assistance. Your student's classroom teacher will keep track of parent sign ups through their account. **The window to sign up for conferences will end at 4pm on Monday, November 16th.** Any changes will need to be communicated directly with the teacher following that date.

You'll receive confirmation of your conference, links for virtual conferences and other information prior to the conference window.

Please reach out to your child's teacher with any questions.



MES PTA Happenings

The Montgomery Elementary School Parent Teacher Association has so much to offer students and families and they are instrumental in supporting our teachers and schools! Special thanks to our Welcome Week, Open House and Back to School Night and Hospitality volunteers and the support provided for upcoming trips and assemblies! Check out the [MES PTA](#) website for volunteer and support opportunities, special offers and fundraisers such as the Mum and Cheesecake sales, and the PTA meeting schedule.



Reminder: Please come out and cheer for us at the Staff Kickball Game, Thursday, October 15, 4:30 at OHES!

Fall 2026 Health Office News



Students' annual state mandatory Health Screening is taking place for all students at VES. Screenings have started and will be completed sometime in December. The screening consists of height, weight and blood pressure measurements as well as a vision and hearing screening. If your child does not pass any part of the health screening, you will receive a medical referral letter to discuss with your child's health care provider.

Cooler temperatures and Fall illnesses can increase Asthma symptoms. If your child has asthma and may require an inhaler in school, please make sure all medical forms and medications are in the Health Office.

Thank you,
Mrs. Cizin and Ms. Tang

Cold Weather and Recess



Students think with clearer brains when they have a chance to get moving. To help with this, we will be holding recess whenever the weather allows. Please expect that we are planning for outdoor recess and dress your student

accordingly. Hats, gloves, scarf, a heavy jacket and appropriate footwear are MUST HAVES!

Be sure to label your student's belongings so we can easily return lost items. Check the Lost and Found during your visits as unclaimed items will be donated.

Cafeteria Snack Updates

Starting November 3rd IDs will be required to purchase snack at the end of the lunch period. This will help support an efficient purchasing process for all as the lunch period begins to wind down.

Young Scholars Institute Service Project

Our 32nd annual schoolwide holiday fundraiser and gift project will take place in December to help support children who are part of this program in Trenton. We will also be collecting gently used children's books. Peer Partner Representatives will help coordinate this project. Please expect more information from your child's teacher as December approaches. We have a longstanding relationship with YSI and we're excited to support YSI families again this year.



Important Dates:

MTSD District Calendar 2026-2027

October 15: Back to School Staff Kickball Game 4:30 pm, OHES Field

October 13-16: Week of Respect

October 19-23 : Digital Citizenship Week

October 30: Halloween Readers Theater and Class Parties

November 5-6: Schools Closed, New Jersey Teachers Convention

November 13: Ruby Bridges Walk (Rain Date 11/17)

November 19-20,23-24: Parent Teacher Conferences; Early/1:35 Dismissal for Students

(Lunch is served on early dismissal days. Recess is canceled. Parent pickup will begin at 1:25)

November 25: Early/1:35 Dismissal

November 26-27: Schools Closed, Fall/Thanksgiving Recess

December 23: Early/1:35 Dismissal for Students

December 24-31, January 1: Winter Recess

January 4: Schools Reopen