Ardsley Middle School

Student and Family Handbook

2026-2027

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Introduction

The goal of Ardsley School District's Code of Conduct is to promote appropriate and constructive behavior. Such a goal encompasses considerably more than simply assigning punishments commensurate with various offenses. It entails counseling, reinforcement of positive behavior, and close and regular communication with parents. In those instances where negative reinforcement is in order, it will be meted out fairly, firmly, consistently and dispassionately, thus becoming a part of the learning process, rather than simply a punitive exercise.

What follows is an abbreviated version of the Ardsley School District's Code of Conduct. The complete and most updated version can be found on the middle school web page.

Student Rights

The Ardsley School District is committed to protecting the rights given to all students under state and federal law. In addition, to promote a safe, healthy, orderly and civil school environment, all District students have the right to:

- Take part in all District activities on an equal basis regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability
- Present their version of the relevant events to school personnel authorized to impose a disciplinary penalty in connection with the imposition of the penalty
- Access school rules and, when necessary, receive an explanation of those rules from school personnel

Student Expression

Students shall be allowed the opportunity for the free expression of ideas. However, a student's freedom will not extend to libelous, slanderous, vulgar, lewd, indecent or obscene words or images or to words or images which by their very use cause others to damage property or physically injure persons. Further, speech which disrupts the work of the school is not allowed. Students may choose to wear political buttons, arm bands or badges of symbolic expression so long as they follow the Ardsley School District's Code of Conduct.

Student Responsibilities

Students attend school so that they may develop to their fullest potential. With this in mind, students are expected to:

- Contribute to maintaining a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning and show respect to other persons and to property
- Be familiar with and abide by all District policies, rules and regulations dealing with student conduct
- Attend school on time, be in class on time and be prepared to learn every day unless they are legally excused
- Work to the best of their ability in all academic and extracurricular pursuits and strive toward their highest level of achievement possible
- Dress appropriately for school and school functions
- Accept responsibility for their actions
- Conduct themselves as representatives of the District when participating in or attending school-sponsored extracurricular events and to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct, demeanor and sportsmanship
- Respect the rights of others, including their right to be educated in an environment that is orderly and disciplined
- Obey school regulations and rules made by school authorities

Responding to Misconduct

Bullying

Bullying of a student by another student is inappropriate and can be considered harassment. For purposes of this Code of Conduct, the term "bullying" among students is defined, in general, as a variety of negative acts carried out repeatedly over time. Bullying involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, with a seemingly more powerful student or group attacking a seemingly less powerful student or group. Bullying can take several forms such as physical, verbal, psychological or electronic. All types of bullying behaviors are violations of the Ardsley School District's Code of Conduct and shall be dealt with immediately with appropriate discipline.

Bystanders

Bystanders engage in misconduct when they do not initiate or directly participate in prohibited conduct; but rather by their action and/or inaction they allow damage or injury which could have been prevented and/or encourage prohibited conduct. Students who are found to be wrongful bystanders may be subject to discipline.

Reporting Of Violations

All students are expected to promptly report violations of the Ardsley School District's Code of Conduct to a teacher, school counselor, school staff, building administration, law enforcement, or through Anonymous Alerts.

Discipline will be assigned in a fair and progressive fashion. The range of disciplinary options that may be imposed for violations of the Ardsley School District's Code of Conduct may be assigned alone or in combination. Penalties include, but are not limited to the following:

- Oral warning by any member of the District staff
- Referral to counseling
- Written warning
- Written notification to parent
- Detention (during school, after school) by teachers, assistant principal, principal, superintendent;
- Suspension from transportation by acting principal, principal, superintendent
- Suspension from athletic participation by coaches, athletic director, acting principal, principal, superintendent
- Suspension from social or extracurricular activities by activity director, acting principal, principal, superintendent
- Suspension of other privileges
- Removal from classroom
- Short-term (five days or less) suspension from school by principal, acting principal, superintendent, board of education
- Long-term (more than five days) suspension from school by superintendent, board of education
- Permanent suspension from school by superintendent, board of education

Student Information

Absence

Any request for a student to be absent must be communicated by a parent to the attendance office at 295-5691 or pzappia@ardsleyschools.org. The reason and specific date and time should be stated. Excessive absence will result in a letter from the school and a meeting with guidance and administration. Updated daily attendance records can be viewed on the Student Portal through Panther's Link and the eSchool Parent Portal.

After- School Clubs & Activities

The Ardsley School District encourages students to participate in curriculum related extra-curricular activity clubs and/or organizations.

After-school clubs and activities are typically held Tuesday, Thursday or Friday and begin in October. An email is sent to families at the beginning of the school year with further details. Clubs and meeting days/times are updated on the AMS website in mid to late September. Clubs and activities are subject to cancellation based on enrollment or budgetary considerations. A club fair is held early in the school year.

Arrival

Students are permitted in the building beginning at 7:30 AM each morning using the commons entrance. Students in 5th and 6th grade must wait in the cafeteria and students in 7th and 8th grade must wait in the commons. Students must remain in these areas until the first bell at 7:38 AM. Before this time, students are not permitted to walk around the building. The only exception to this procedure is if a student has a pass from a teacher or is carrying sports equipment, a large project or a musical instrument, in which case they may be released at 7:35 AM. All students must report to their first period class by 7:45 AM, which is when the second bell rings and 1st period attendance is taken. After 7:45 AM, all students must enter the building using the main entrance only and are considered late to school. Please refer to our section on lateness for additional information.

For those dropping off their child, please follow the parking lot signage for AM Student Drop-Off.

Assemblies

There will be times when students will gather in the auditorium for assembly programs. Students are expected to enter the auditorium with their teacher in a quiet, orderly fashion. They are to listen attentively to the program and return quietly with the teacher to their respective room.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes throughout the day and attendance is taken on a period-by-period basis. If, for any reason, classes are missed, it is the student's responsibility to obtain work or tests missed and to determine when they can be made up.

Backpacks

Due to safety, weight of the bags, and a lack of classroom space, students are asked to self- regulate the number of books necessary to carry between classes. As an alternative, students may wish to carry string bags. Students who wear backpacks that are too large or too heavy may be asked to leave them in their locker. Backpacks are not permitted in the cafeteria or commons during lunch periods.

Bus Expectations

Riding the school bus is a privilege and we expect students to behave appropriately. Our primary goal is to ensure that every student can travel to and from school safely, respectfully, and efficiently. Students are expected to follow the directions of the bus driver and school staff and to treat their fellow passengers with courtesy.

Bus Transportation

District busing is provided to Ardsley Middle School students that have a walking distance exceeding one mile from the school. Students are not permitted to take a different bus home.

The following expectations apply to all students while riding the bus:

- Stay in their seat
- Buckle their seatbelt
- Make room so other students can sit with them
- Use a quiet voice
- Use appropriate language
- Keep their hands and body to themselves
- Safely board and exit the bus by waiting patiently
- Refrain from eating

If expectations are not met, there is a progressive continuum of consequences leading to removal from the bus.

Classroom Webpage

Long-term projects, upcoming tests, resource guides and nightly assignments are posted on each teacher's Google Classroom and are required to be posted by 4:00 PM each day before they are due.

Communication

Important information is contained on the school's web page. Go to ams.ardsleyschools.org and visit quick links, keeping connected, and upcoming events. Follow this link to our Media and Communications website.

Detention

Detentions may be issued for infractions that pose a danger to the student or others. If a student receives 6 detentions, their parents will be contacted and an after-school detention will be scheduled.

Discipline

Discipline will be enforced according to the Ardsley School District's Code of Conduct and the Dignity Act if students engage in prohibited conduct while in school or school-related activities or while on a school bus. The full list of prohibited student conduct and code violations can be found in the complete version of the Ardsley School District's Code of Conduct.

Discipline Procedures

Disciplinary action, when necessary, will be firm, fair and consistent so as to be the most effective in changing student behavior. As a general rule, discipline will be progressive. This means that a student's first violation will usually merit a lighter penalty than later violations. The repeating of a violation may lead to more serious discipline. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, school staff authorized to impose disciplinary penalties will consider the following:

- The student's age and grade;
- The type of violation and the circumstances which led to the violation;
- The student's prior disciplinary record;
- The effectiveness of other forms of discipline;
- Information from parents, teachers and/or others, as appropriate;
- Other extenuating circumstances.

The full list of student consequences can be found here.

Dismissal

Dismissal is at 2:35 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 1:55 PM on Wednesday. Students must ride the bus home, walk home or have arrangements to be picked-up by an adult. For those parents picking up their child, follow the parking lot signage for PM Student Pick-Up. Only those students supervised during an after-school club or activity may remain in the building or on school grounds.

Dress Code

All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Clothing must be safe, appropriate and not disrupt or interfere with the educational process. It must not promote and/or endorse the use of vulgarities, discrimination, violence or drugs. Students are not permitted to wear hats or other head coverings during school hours, except during outdoor recess and religious reasons. Safe footwear must also be worn at all times. Students who violate the dress code may be required to modify their appearance by covering or removing the offending item and replacing it with an acceptable item.

Early Departure

Students who leave before 2:35 PM or 1:55 PM on Wednesdays are considered to have left early from school. Only those students with a legitimate reason for an early departure communicated by a parent to the attendance officer will be considered Excused. The attendance officer can be reached at extension 295-5691 or pzappia@ardsleyschools.org. Excessive early departures will result in a letter from the school, a detention, or a meeting with guidance and administration. Updated daily attendance records can be viewed on the Ardsley School District's parent portal.

Electronic Devices

Students are asked to leave all electronic devices at home. If a student chooses to bring an electronic device to school, it must remain off and in the student's locker.

This includes phones, earpods/earbuds, smartwatches, headphones, and other accessories. Smartwatches may be worn as long as they are in school mode or airplane mode. The school is not responsible for the loss or theft of electronic devices. Students who use an electronic device without permission after the school day has begun will have to retrieve the device from the assistant principal's office. Any subsequent violations of this policy will require a parent to retrieve the phone from the school. AMS's full cell phone policy can be found here.

Field Trips

Students on school trips are reminded that they are subject to the same Ardsley School District Code of Conduct as when they are in school.

Food and Food Deliveries

Students may not have food, beverages, or other items delivered to school by Uber Eats, DoorDash, or similar services. This includes deliveries arranged by parents/guardians for students. Should parents decide to drop off food, it should be left with security. The sharing of food is strictly prohibited. Given the time of day that our 6th and 7th graders eat lunch, there are designated periods that they may have snacks (3rd period for 6th graders and 8th period for 7th graders). Snacks should be easy to eat quickly, quietly, and not require utensils, not messy or strongly scented, and nutritious and energy-boosting (granola bars, cheese sticks). Snacks must be free of peanuts and tree nuts. Students will clean up after themselves. Gum chewing is prohibited throughout the day.

Grading

Report card grades are letter equivalents and are based on specific criteria, such as the following examples: discussion and class participation, homework, quizzes, unit tests and final exams, projects or science labs.

Report Cards and Gradebooks are available four times per year at the end of each marking period and gradebooks are available from 3:00 PM – 7:00 AM. Report cards and gradebooks are both viewable through the District's Parent and Student portal. The District's Online Gradebook Guide can be found here. Fifth graders do not receive letter grades for the 1st marking period.

Parents are encouraged to contact teachers at any point to request an update on their child's academic growth. Teacher contact information can be found on the AMS website. The District's Grading and Reporting Handbook can be found here.

Hallways

While in the hallways:

- Walk at all times.
- Use appropriate voices and avoid yelling or disruptive behavior.
- Do not block hallways, doorways, stairways, or classroom entrances.

- Do not congregate in the middle of the hallway.
- Follow staff directions.

Homework

Homework provides practice in basic skills, good study habits, and extends classroom experiences. To be most effective, it is important that the classroom teacher, parent and student understand the specific purpose of each homework assignment. To the greatest degree possible, homework will be assigned on a regular basis with a balanced amount assigned each evening. The time spent completing homework increases progressively throughout middle school, starting at around 50 minutes in 5th grade to approximately 90 minutes in 8th grade.

Homework: Excused Absences

On the third day of an excused absence, a parent can place a request with the guidance office to obtain the necessary assignments from their child's teachers. Please call the guidance secretary at extension 295-5650 before 9:00 AM for assistance. The absentee is responsible for having the assignments picked-up. For single absences, students should check with a classmate or check the teacher's class web page for missed assignments on Google Classroom.

Homework: Unexcused Absences

If a student has an unexcused absence, missed work will be provided when they return to school. Students will be given an amount of time equal to their absence to complete the work. For example, if a student will be absent due to a non-school sponsored event for three days, they will receive the missed work when they return and will be given three days to complete the assignments. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child's school counselor.

Late Buses

Late buses depart the middle school on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at 3:50 PM. These buses are available to accommodate students involved in after-school clubs and activities only. Since these buses do not follow the normal routes, please make sure your child knows their bus stop and bus number, which are contained in the email sent home at the beginning of the year regarding after-school clubs and activities.

Lateness

Students who arrive after 7:45 AM are considered late and must enter the building through the main entrance and go directly to the attendance officer, who will give them a late pass for admittance to class. Only those students with a legitimate reason for lateness communicated by a parent to the attendance officer will be considered excused. The attendance office can be reached at 295-5691 or pzappia@ardsleyschools.org. Excessive tardiness will result in a letter from the school, a detention, or a meeting with guidance and administration. Updated daily attendance records can be viewed on the eSchool Parent Portal.

Library Media Center

The library media center is open after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays until 3:45 PM for those

students who wish to study or complete their homework.

Lockers

Every student is issued a school locker. Students should not share their lock or locker combination with anyone. Lockers are the property of the school and are subject to random administrative search at any time. The school is not responsible for the loss or theft of articles placed in the lockers. Students are responsible for cleanliness in and around their locker. Students are permitted to decorate or organize their locker on Friday afternoons after 4:00 PM but only with adult supervision. Locker decorations will be removed after ten days. Vandalism to lockers will result in disciplinary action as well as financial liability for any damage caused to school property. Any non school-issued locks will be removed.

Lost & Found

Our lost and found articles are located outside of the auditorium in the main lobby and in each gym locker room. If something is lost, please check these spots as soon as possible. Periodically, the lost and found items are gathered and donated to charity.

Modified Sports

Modified sports are only available to 7th and 8th grade students and may meet on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Refer to the Guide to AMS on the website, which lists the various teams available. Students participating in modified sports are strongly encouraged to use their gym locker to store valuables. They can also use a large locker, but can only do so if they ask for permission from a physical education teacher. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen property. Modified sports teams make their decisions about participants based on the number of students interested. At times, the interest level creates the need to maintain a workable team size, resulting in cuts. Any additional questions can be directed to the District's Athletic Director at 295-5870.

Pupil Personnel Services

Available to students are four full-time school counselors, a nurse, two full-time and one part-time school psychologist, and two speech/language teachers. Students and parents are encouraged to call upon these professionals when they have a need. Articles and books are available for parents on topics of interest. Guidance classes are provided to all 5th and 6th grade students and include topics such as decision-making, friendship, conflict resolution and harassment.

Safety Drills

Emergency drills are held periodically as required by law and are an important safety precaution. Students are to follow the safety procedures posted in each classroom. During fire and evacuation drills, students are required to leave the building quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner. During all drills, students are to remain silent in order to hear directions as needed. Parents will be notified of all drills within one week of the scheduled drill.

Safety Procedures

All doors to the school are locked. Students are not permitted to open any exterior door to visitors to the building.

Student Government

Students are encouraged to participate in student council. It is the duty of the student council to establish reasonable standards for qualification of candidates to serve in offices of the council. Elections for student council are conducted in the fall in accordance with the principles of our democracy and elected student representatives shall work with the faculty, administration and student body in identifying those areas of appropriate student responsibility.

Teacher Requests

Teacher requests are not accepted from parents. However, a parent is permitted one teacher non-request per year, per child if the child or an older sibling has already had a particular teacher. All teacher non-requests should be made through the child's school counselor in writing. Due to scheduling constraints, we cannot guarantee that all teacher non-requests can be honored.

Telephone Use & Messages

If a student needs to be contacted at school, please call 295-5654 for the main office. We will communicate the message, but we will not interrupt a class or remove a student from class, except in an emergency situation. If a student wishes to contact their family, there is a phone in the main office that can be used with permission. Students are only permitted to have a cell phone if it is off and in the student's locker and it may only be used before or after school.

Tests

Every effort is made by teachers to schedule tests in such a way that there are not more than two on any given day for a particular student.

Visitors

Visitors to the school are permitted by appointment only and must announce themselves via intercom through the main entrance before gaining entry. Appointments must be arranged in advance with a staff member.

Weather Emergencies

Information will be posted on the District's webpage and a blast, voice message or text will be sent out through our notification system. To review or update your information, visit the Parent Portal.