Briarwood Newsletter

November 2026

Principal Letter



Dear Families,

As principal, my highest priority is ensuring that every student feels safe and secure at school, emotionally, academically, and physically. An important part of this responsibility is helping students understand how to respond in a variety of emergency situations. Throughout the school year, students participate in safety drills designed to prepare them for situations such as a fire, severe weather, a threat outside the building, or the need to relocate to another location. These drills help students become familiar with safety procedures so they can respond calmly and confidently if a real emergency ever occurs. Below are some drills we regularly practice:

- **Shelter in Place/Shelter**: Students move indoors and take shelter in a designated area away from windows and exterior walls. This response may be used during severe weather conditions or situations occurring outside the school.
- **Evacuate**: Used in response to hazards such as a fire or gas leak. Students follow their teacher to a designated evacuation area, where attendance is taken. Staff sweep the building to confirm all occupants have exited.
- **Lockdown**: Implemented when there is an immediate threat inside the building. Classroom doors are locked, lights are turned off, window coverings are secured, and students move to a protected area. A lockdown is only lifted by law enforcement in coordination with school administration or district security after the situation has been resolved and an official all-clear has been given.

The following emergency responses may be used if circumstances require them, but they are not routinely practiced as drills:

- **Hold in Place/Hold**: Used when hallways need to be temporarily cleared. Students remain in classrooms, and instruction continues as normal.
- **Secure Lockout**: Initiated when there is a potential concern outside the building. All exterior doors are secured, and entry and exit are restricted while learning

inside the school continues. An example might be police activity in the vicinity of the school.

Families are notified in advance of scheduled safety drills. We recently welcomed the St. Paul Boulevard Fire Department for their annual safety presentations. Many students have already participated and may have come home excited to share what they learned.
We know that students learn best when they feel safe, supported, and prepared. These drills are an important part of maintaining a secure learning environment, and we conduct them thoughtfully, calmly, and in a developmentally appropriate manner. Thank you for your continued trust, partnership, and support. As we begin the holidays, I wish all of you a safe, healthy, and joyful season!

Warmly,
Jennifer DeWitz
Principal

School Contact Information

Principal: Jennifer DeWitz | **Jennifer_DeWitz@westiron.monroe.edu**
Secretary: Amber Kash | **Amber_Kash@westiron.monroe.edu**
Main office: 585-336-1610
Fax: 585-336-1611
Website: westirondequoit.org/briarwood_school
Health Office: 585-336-1618
Nurse: Lisa Marrapese
Transportation: 585-336-2992
District Office: 585-342-5500 | **District website: westirondequoit.org**

Upcoming Events

NOVEMBER

- 11/06: **NO SCHOOL** - Parent/Teacher Conference Day
- 11/11: **NO SCHOOL**- Veteran's Day
- 11/19: PTSA Family Breakfast 8:00 a.m.
- 11/19: School Picture Make Up Day
- 11/25 - 11/27: **NO SCHOOL**- Thanksgiving Recess

DECEMBER

- 12/04: PTSA Bingo for Books - 6 p.m.
- 12/11: Report Cards Available in IC
- 12/21: Briarwood Winter-Sing-Alongs
- 12/23 - 1/01: **NO SCHOOL-** Holiday Recess

JANUARY

- 1/04: School Resumes
- 1/13 - 1/27: PTSA Wintry Wednesdays
- 1/19: **NO SCHOOL** - Martin Luther King Jr Day

FULL CALENDAR: westirondequoit.org/briarwood_school



Understanding RTI/MTSS and Summer Lab

Empowering every student starts with the right support. At West Irondequoit, we use proven strategies like Response to Intervention (RTI) and Summer Lab to help students thrive academically and social-emotionally. Here's what you need to know:

WHAT IS RTI?

Response to Intervention or Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a structured approach to support students who may need extra help academically, social-emotionally, or behaviorally. It focuses on early identification and targeted support so students can succeed. How does RTI/MTSS work?

Screening: All students are assessed to identify those who may need additional support. We utilize AIMSWeb Plus and iReady to screen our students' academics. For social-emotional screening, we utilize the Panorama SEL Surveys in Grades 3-12.

Tiered Support:

- Tier 1: High-quality instruction for all students.
- Tier 2: Targeted help for students who need more support. This can be provided by the classroom teacher, interventionist, or related service provider in a small group.
- Tier 3: Intensive, individualized interventions for students with ongoing challenges. This support is provided by interventionists or related service providers in a smaller group setting.
- Progress Monitoring: Regular checks to ensure interventions are working. Teachers utilize AIMSWeb Plus progress monitoring tools, teacher-created assessments, or observational data to progress monitor students on their goals.
- Collaboration: Teachers, administrators, and families work together to support each child on their goals to close gaps.

At West Irondequoit, RTI/MTSS is built into the K-6 school day; students in grades 7–12 can access courses for literacy, math, social-emotional, and executive functioning needs.

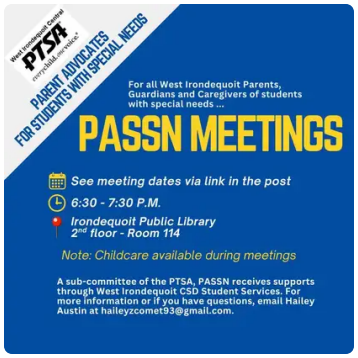
SUMMER LAB PROGRAM

Students receiving intervention services during the school year are invited to join Summer Lab for continued learning.

- Grades: K–6
- Dates: July 26 – Aug. 12 (Monday–Thursday)
- Attendance: Students must attend all 12 days for continuity.

If your child qualifies, please schedule summer plans around these dates.

-Kelly Santora, Director of Data, Assessment & Interventions



PASSN SCHEDULE 2026-27

On behalf of the WICPTSA and PASSN, please read below to learn more about the Parent Advocates for Student Services Network and see its monthly meeting schedule. PASSN is comprised of district parent/guardian advocates of students who receive support through West Irondequoit Student Services. Meetings are a safe space for families (note: No December meeting).

Nov. 9 - Workshop with district Occupational Therapist, Andy Casini.
Jan. 11 – Trauma Informed Workshop with district counselors and psychologists.
Feb. 8 – Workshop on Bullying with Phil Ortolani, district Director of Health and Wellness.
March 8 - CSE Workshop with Directors of Student Services, Joanna Rowe and Amy Donk.
April 12 – Mindfulness Workshop with E-RYT 200 & RCYT, Lisa Chidsey.
May 10 – Booth Night with community resources to support your children and family
June 14 – POTENTIAL MEETING - School year recap, summer service plans & how will we stay structured this summer?

Email **haileyzcomet93@gmail.com** with any questions or for more information.

Flu season on deck



As we enter flu season, our district would like to remind families of the importance of preventing the spread of influenza (flu) and other seasonal illnesses. The health and safety of our students and staff remain a top priority. Families are encouraged to follow these recommendations:

- **Keep children home when they are sick.** Students experiencing fever, chills, body aches, cough, sore throat, or significant fatigue should remain home until they are well enough to return.
- **Follow school illness guidelines.** Students should return to school when their symptoms are improving overall and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication, consistent with district policy and public health guidance.
- **Practice good hand hygiene.** Encourage frequent handwashing with soap and water or the use of hand sanitizer when appropriate.
- **Cover coughs and sneezes.** Students should use a tissue or their elbow and dispose of tissues properly.
- **Consider flu vaccination.** Families are encouraged to speak with their healthcare provider about the annual flu vaccine.
- **Encourage healthy habits.** Adequate sleep, nutritious meals, and proper hydration support overall health and well-being.

Please notify the school of illness-related absences. The district will continue to monitor illness-related absences and follow applicable **public health recommendations**. Thank you for your cooperation and continued partnership in helping maintain a healthy learning environment for all students and staff throughout flu season.
*For more information, go to the district's Health Information page (**linked here**), which includes a directory of our nurses by school.*



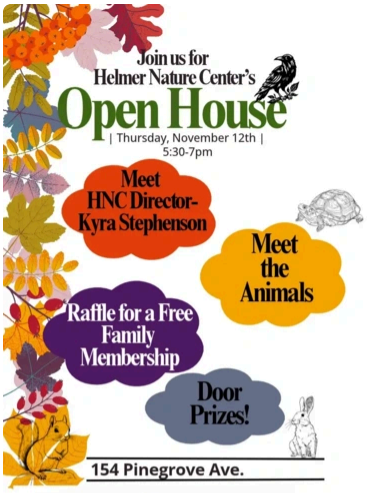
UPCOMING HELMER EVENTS!

Pumpkin Smash, Sunday Nov. 8, 10 a.m. - noon: Join us for our 2nd annual Smash-o-Lantern event. Bring your Jack-o-Lanterns and have fun smashing them before adding them to our compost! See graphic for more info!

Open House, Thursday, Nov. 12 5:30-7 p.m.: Stop by during HNC Open House hours for an opportunity to visit our animal ambassadors, meet the new HNC Director, Kyra Stephenson, and learn a little more about Helmer!

Tuesdays on the Trails, 1st & 3rd Tuesdays: Beginning Dec. 1, stop by for a Director-led walk in the HNC woods. This is a great opportunity to spend some time in nature! We hope you will join! See graphic for dates, times and more info.

For all events, go to the **Helmer webpage**.


Join us for
Helmer Nature Center's
Open House
| Thursday, November 12th |
5:30-7pm
Meet HNC Director- Kyra Stephenson
Meet the Animals
Raffle for a Free Family Membership
Door Prizes!
154 Pinegrove Ave.


PUMPKIN SMASH
GREEN YOUR HALLOWEEN
WHEN: Sunday, November 8, 10am-12pm
WHERE: Helmer Nature Center
WHAT: SMASH-O-LANTERN!
Bring your Jack-o-lanterns* and SMASH them before adding them to our compost!
AND... Bring any of your leftover Halloween Candy to donate to Operation Shoebox- to send to Troops overseas
*REMOVE CANDLES AND SEEDS.
WE CANNOT ACCEPT PAINTED PUMPKINS
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PUMPKIN SMASH VISIT WWW.SCARCE.ORG
ALL ALL


Tuesdays on the Trails
Join us on the First & Third Tuesdays each month.
Director Kyra Stephenson will lead a relaxing walk in our woods. These walks are a great way to connect with nature and see all that HNC has to offer.
These are to be enjoyed by all, come as you are, on your own or with a friend!
First Tuesdays @ 5-6pm
Dec. 1 Jan. 5 Feb. 2 Mar. 2
Apr. 6 May 4 Jun. 1
Third Tuesdays @ 10-11am
Dec. 15 Jan. 19 Feb. 16 Mar. 16
Apr. 20 May 18 Jun. 15
No registration necessary.
Meet at the HNC benches.
MEET HERE WITH YOUR JACK-O-LANTERNS
Please Remember...
-We CANNOT accept any pumpkins before or after 11/8 , 10am-12pm
-PLEASE DO NOT DROP OFF PUMPKINS BEFORE OR AFTER!
-All candles and wax must be removed
-Pumpkins must be seedless and unpainted
-Bring any Halloween candy you want out of your house and we'll send it to the troops overseas through Operation Shoebox!


WEST IRONDEQUOIT SCHOOL DISTRICT
PEAK PERFORMANCE
JOBS! JOIN OUR TEAM
WE'RE HIRING!
CLICK ANYWHERE ON THIS GRAPHIC TO SEE
CURRENT OPENINGS



Update Emergency Contact Info

Parents/Guardians
Do you:

- **Have a new cell phone number or email address?**
- **Have a new work phone number?**
- **Need to update your emergency contacts?**

Be sure to keep your child's school informed of any changes to your phone numbers or emergency contact information. Update info directly on the **Parent Portal,** or send in a note with your child.

Thank you!

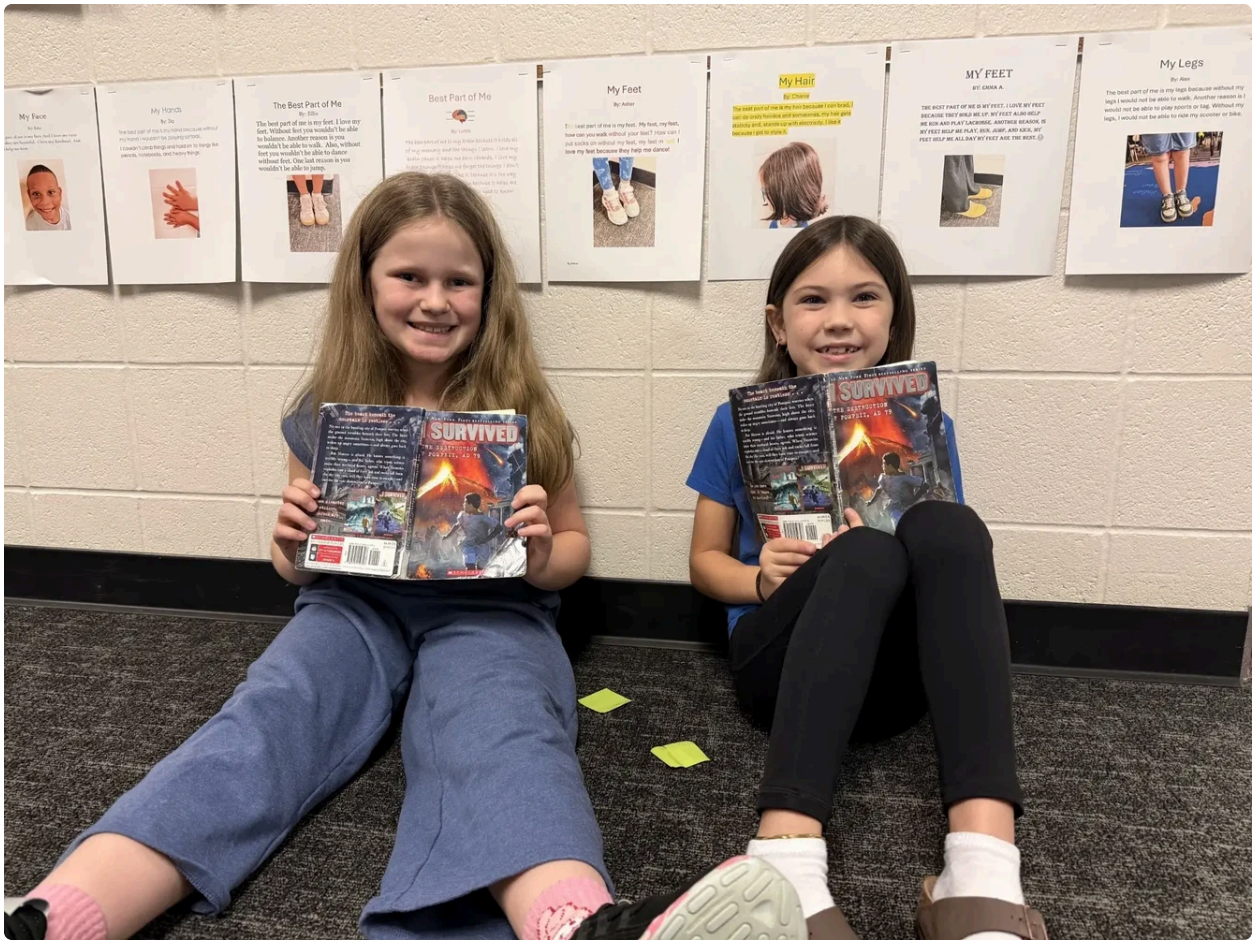
Look What's Happening AT Briarwood


35
NY

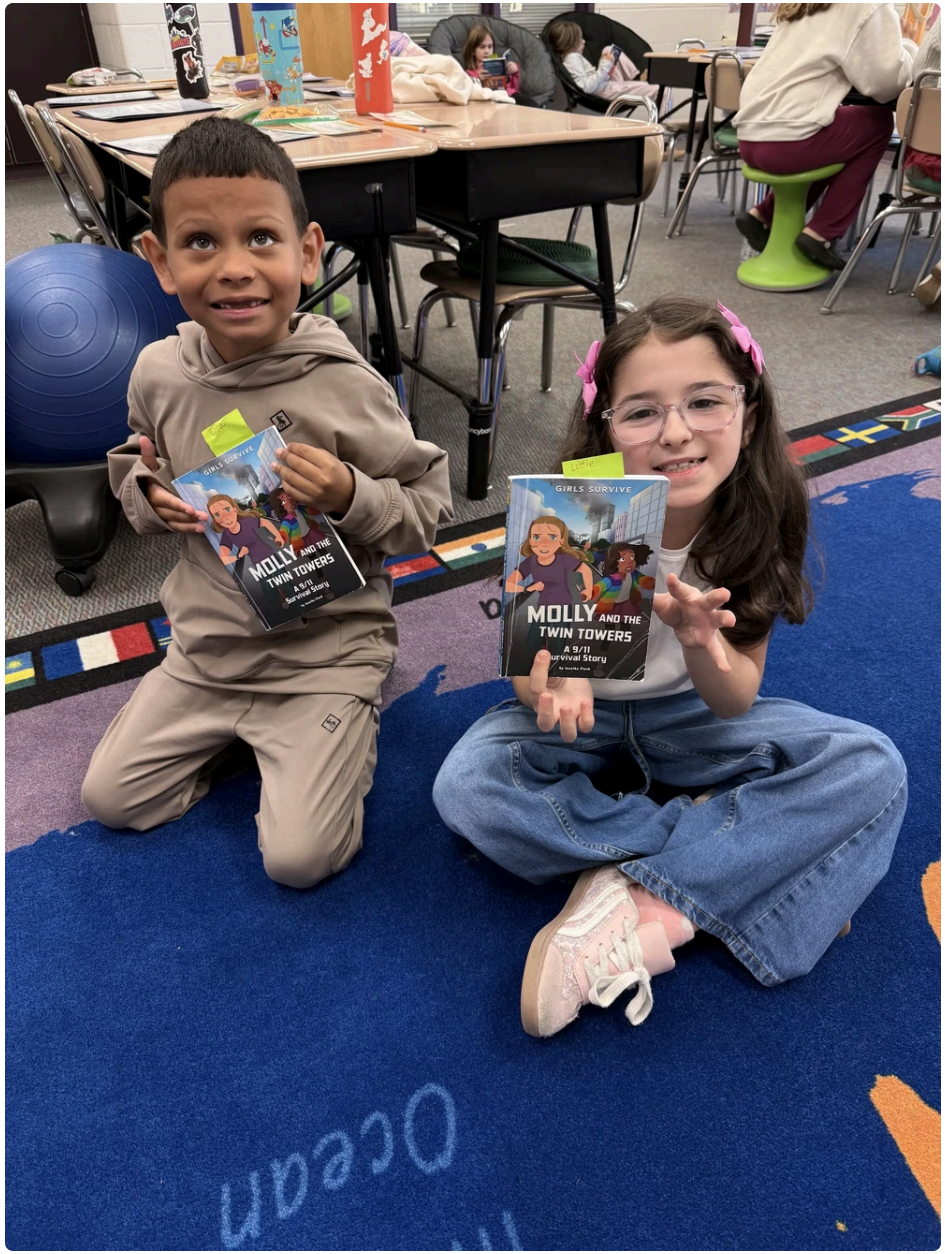



Champion
Mr. Pr
Ms. B




My Face
My Hands
The Best Part of Me
By: Ellie
The best part of me is my feet. I love my feet. Without feet you wouldn't be able to balance. Another reason is you wouldn't be able to walk. Also, without feet you wouldn't be able to dance without feet. One last reason is you wouldn't be able to jump.
Best Part of Me
My Feet
By: Asher
My Hair
By: Chanel
MY FEET
BY: EMMA A
My Legs
By: Alex
I SURVIVED

DISHONORED
DISHONORED


GIRLS SURVIVE
MOLLY AND THE TWIN TOWERS
A 9/11 Survival Story
GIRLS SURVIVE
MOLLY AND THE TWIN TOWERS
A 9/11 Survival Story
Ocean


THINKING
Together, we will...
Mr. Dibrito

