



HORACE MITCHELL PRIMARY SCHOOL
7 MITCHELL SCHOOL LANE
KITTERY POINT, MAINE 03905



Kendra Downs, Interim Principal
Principal
kdowns@kitteryschools.com
jbassett@kitteryschools.com

FAX 207-439-9198

Joe Bassett, Interim Asst.

TELEPHONE 207-439-1707

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers About PreK and Kindergarten updated 2/2026

What are some ways to learn about what to expect at Mitchell School?

The websites connected with Mitchell School are a great starting point. You'll find really helpful information at all different levels. Please take a moment to read through the student handbook, the school Facebook or Instagram accounts (or check the Facebook feed on the Mitchell School homepage if you do not use social media), and learn about all that is offered here. Being informed about school happenings and curriculum helps families to feel a sense of belonging. Another good way to learn about Mitchell School is by meeting other parents, getting involved with the PTA, volunteering, and asking questions.

Will I have input on my child's placement?

When you meet with the principal and school counselor at registration, we will ask questions about your child to help us with placement. We try to make sure that each child has a familiar face when they come to school. We also know that sometimes, some kids are not a good match to be in the classroom together, so you can share that as well.

When will we find out about our child's placement?

In August you will receive a letter or an email from your child's teacher. This letter will also include your appointment day and time to meet 1:1 with your classroom teacher, more information below.

When does school start?

The first full day of school for PreK and Kindergarten students is September 2nd. Students in grades 1-3 start August 31st. We use the first two days of the school year (8/31 and 9/1) to screen all incoming Pre K and Kindergartners for school readiness. Your child will have a chance to spend some one-on-one time with their teacher in the classroom. The screening, which is required by state law, assesses basic school readiness skills.

What are the class sizes?

We try to keep our class sizes between 16 and 17 students for PreK and 14-18 students for Kindergarten. The number of classes and students per class in Kindergarten can shift depending on enrollment.

How long are students expected to sit?

We understand that our PreK and Kindergarten students are meant to move! We ask students to sit

for short periods of time, followed by transitions and opportunities to move. In addition to this, some classrooms offer alternative seating for students who have a difficult time remaining seated.

What are some ways we can help our child be ready for PreK and Kindergarten?

One of the biggest challenges for PreK and Kindergarten students is self-care/self-help. Here are some things that would be great for you to practice having your child do independently before coming to school:

- Getting dressed (including shoes, jackets, snowpants or anything else you send them with)
- Opening small packages (chips, cheese sticks, etc.)
- Opening/closing lunch boxes and containers in the lunch box
- Blowing their nose/washing their hands
- Using the restroom (including wiping)

Is there an orientation or other chances to meet their teacher before the first day of school?

PreK and Kindergarten students have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with their teacher before they start school. These appointments are scheduled on the first two days of school for grades 1-3. This also is a time for parents or caregivers to meet their child's teacher, see the classroom and finalize plans for transportation on the first day of school.

On the first day (or the first week) should I drive my child to school?

We encourage them to come on the bus from day one. The transition seems easier for them if the break is quick and clean and they get into a regular routine together. Many parents or caregivers put their children on the bus at the bus stop and then drive to school to take pictures on the first day. Staff members will meet the children when the buses arrive during the first week and there are many helpers to assist them as they learn the school routines. Staff will escort students to their classrooms where their teachers will be waiting! If you are not ready to have your child ride the bus, the ideal parent drop-off time is between 8:05 and 8:15.

How will I know which bus my child will ride?

The schedule is posted on the Kittery School Department website. It's usually published sometime the week prior to the first day and is quite easy to follow. You can also ask your neighbors and introduce your child to other children who will be riding the same bus. Ledgemere Transportation Company is our current bus service provider. Your child's teacher will also confirm after school plans at your assessment appointment and the office will be able to confirm buses for you at that time if necessary.

Each teacher provides your child with a bus name tag with pertinent information on it. Your child should wear this for the first two weeks of school. It helps them to be called by name more readily and is very important for the bus driver.

What if my child gets on the wrong bus?

The children have the above mentioned information tags. The school bus drivers have radio contact with the school, the bus company office, and with each other. If your child gets on the wrong bus, they will complete the scheduled run and then be dropped off at the school or their destination. We will keep you informed.

Where do I drop off/pick up my child?

If late to school, go to the office and your student will be issued a pass. We ask that you say your goodbyes in the main lobby, a staff member will walk them to their classroom. If you'd like to pick up

your child, please send a note or email the office. Buses will be dismissed at 3:00 followed by walkers at 3:10. If you are picking up your child, you will need to wait in the line on the hill until the buses exit the circle. Once they exit, cars come through the circle and staff will help your child find your car.

Please send a note or call the office before noon if there is ANY change in your child's dismissal routine.

STUDENT DISMISSALS All dismissals are done through the office. If an early dismissal is necessary, the parent or guardian must come to the office to sign a dismissal form and pick up the student. This procedure ensures the safety of your child, therefore, we deeply encourage our parents to create simple and consistent after school plans. Identification may be required. We do not allow dismissals after 2:45, you will have to pick them up before then or wait until regular dismissal.

Please send a note to the office with your child or call the office to inform us of an early dismissal. If you plan to pick your child up BEFORE the end of the school day, we need to be notified in writing prior to 12:00 PM – WE WILL ACCEPT AN EMAIL TO: lpatterson@kitteryschools.com or ksweeney@kitteryschools.com. Please include your child's teacher on this email so that they can have your student packed up and ready for you.

What happens if I am not going to be home when my child's bus gets there?

It is our practice that a parent/guardian or designee meets our PreK and Kindergarten children as they get off the school bus. If you can't meet (or beat!) the bus home, please call the school office. We are in constant contact with the buses. The time of bus arrival will vary the first two weeks of school as all of us settle into the new routine. Please plan accordingly.

School hours: 8:15 AM to 3:00 PM (Drop off starts at 8:05)

If there is a 2 hour delay, school will start at 10:25AM (Drop off starts at 10:05)

How do I communicate with my child's teacher?

A red folder has been provided for your child by the school as a means of communication between home and school. The folder is to travel back and forth daily. Any notices for you, as a parent, will be placed in the folder for you to check daily. Likewise, any notices you have for your child's teacher or the school, please put them in the folder as well. We, too, will check it daily.

Each teacher is available by voicemail through the school phone system and also by email on the school website. Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or concerns.

What does the daily schedule look like?

PreK

Morning:

- Morning Meeting
- Word Work
- 1 Daily special (Art, STEM, Library, Music, Physical Education)
- Recess
- Small group instruction
- Lunch

Afternoon:

- Rest
- Read aloud
- Centers
- Recess

Kindergarten

Morning:

- Connections / Choice time
- Language block
- Math block
- Recess and lunch period

Afternoon:

- Learning centers and thematic projects (science, social studies, and health)
- Afternoon snack
- 1 Daily special (Art, STEM, Library, Music, Physical Education)
- Rest
- Recess

What about snack, lunch, and breakfast?

Snack: A 15-20 minute snack time is scheduled in the afternoon. Please pack and clearly label ONE small healthy snack to fuel them for the remainder of the day. Separate and inform your child which item is a snack and what items are for lunch. Lunch and snacks will often be stored in separate locations. Labeling them really helps to reduce confusion. Having your child involved in packing their snack and lunch is also helpful.

Lunch: Lunch is free for all students. 30 minutes is allotted for lunchtime. A refrigerator is *not* available for the storage of lunches or snacks from home. A menu will be coming home regarding all lunch offerings. [Horace Mitchell Primary School](#)

Breakfast: Breakfast is free for all students and will be available upon arrival at school.

Nut Free Classrooms - we are no longer a nut free school, however, we will continue to have nut free classrooms for students that have nut allergies. If your child is placed in a nut-free classroom, we ask that you check labels carefully and make sure to not send in snack or lunch items that contain nuts.

What does rest time look like?

Rest time is roughly 15-20 minutes to start the year and decreases or goes away as the year goes on. The children may or may not fall asleep. The children are provided with vinyl rest mats.

What supplies do I need to provide?

We'd like each child to have a backpack that is big enough for carrying a snack, lunch, the home/school folder, library books, snow gear, etc. Your child's teacher will send a letter in August and may have a few things for you to bring in for the fall but they are very basic school supplies.

We try to go outside as often as possible. Winter gear is required especially once the snow starts falling. This includes hats, gloves, snow pants, jackets, and boots. During this time, an extra pair of sneakers for the classroom that can be kept here is super helpful. Throughout the school year, rain jackets and rain boots are also great during wet weather so that we can go out even if it is a bit wet.

An extra outfit each season is also helpful for when your student may have an accident and need a change. This should include pants, shirt, underwear and socks.

What do I tell my child about the bathroom?

There is one in each PreK and Kindergarten classroom. Most teachers do not require the children to ask permission unless in a special circumstance. Children should be able to manage their own bathroom needs (wiping, dressing, undressing). If your child has any issues with self toileting or constipation that results in soiling, please speak with our school nurse during the registration process so she can help you develop a plan for your child. In case of accidents, please provide one spare change of clothes to be kept here at school for the year (including socks and underwear).

Hand washing is part of our daily routine.

What about “Show and Tell”, birthday invitations, toys from home and the like?

We DO NOT distribute birthday party invitations at school. Please check with your child’s teacher on how show and tell are handled in each particular class. Toys from home are not allowed at school as they often get lost or become a distraction.

How are my child’s belongings managed?

Children are assigned a cubby space in the hallway where they can store their personal belongings. However, anything that comes to school is at risk of getting lost. Please be sure to label all of your child’s items and clothing. Children are encouraged to keep track of their own belongings. Please choose jackets and other clothing that your child can fasten by herself whenever possible.

How does Mitchell School keep my child safe?

All of the doors at Mitchell School are locked during the school day. All visitors are required to report to the school office when they enter the building. We do require ALL visitors to sign in and wear a visitor’s name tag. We also may ask to see a valid I.D. before approving entrance into the building beyond the secured main office lobby.

Emergency Procedures: Evacuation and Lockdown Drills

Evacuation drill procedures are marked clearly in every classroom, student areas, and the cafeteria. Classroom teachers review fire drills and lockdown procedures with the students at the beginning of each year. Drills are conducted at least 10 times a year.

Do parents volunteer at school?

Yes. Parents volunteer in many different capacities at Mitchell School. Some examples include volunteering in the library, organizing or participating in PTA-sponsored events, becoming a mentor, helping out with school picture day. Parents are welcome in our school. All visitors must sign in at the front office and wear name tags when they are in the building.

What about health concerns?

If your child is sick or you have any concerns about their health, please call the office to speak to the nurse.

What if my child needs medication during the school day?

The school does not encourage dosing of medications during the school day, but can accommodate your child’s medication regimen if medically indicated. If your child requires medication during the school day on a regular basis, please follow the steps below:

1. Medications should be delivered to the school by an adult.
2. Medications must be in an unaltered pharmacy labeled container.
3. A doctor or nurse practitioner must write an order for the medicine to be given during the day.
4. You must sign a consent form for the medication to be administered.

Inhalers and Epipens are recognized as needed rescue medications and require the first 2 steps, but have different paperwork that is required from you and your child's provider. These forms can be located on the [nursing website](#).

If your child requires medication for a short period of time, such as an antibiotic, the first two steps are required. Please call the nurse to let her know that your child will need daily medication on a short term basis so that a plan can be put in place.

Are children with nits or lice allowed to stay in school?

Yes. Studies confirm that approximately 1% of the population between the ages of 4 and 8 have lice at any given time. They also show that most children do not pick up lice at school. We ask that you check your child's head at home once a week to make sure that they do not have nits or lice. An excellent resource to learn more about this is on the school's nursing blog in the resource column on the right hand side. Here is the link: <https://kitteryschoolnurses.blogspot.com/>

What if my child misses school?

Please call the school if your child is sick or you need to keep her home. A sick line is available 24 hours a day by dialing 439-1707 ext. 222. If we do not hear from you by 9:00, we will call you to make sure your child is home safely with you. If we cannot reach you, we will ask the police department to conduct a safety check.

Is it O.K. to take a vacation when school is in session?

While we appreciate the quality time offered by a family vacation, we cannot condone taking this time away from the school year. It is disruptive to the continuity of the student's instructional program and places additional work upon the classroom teacher to "catch the student up" on the work they have missed in their absence. Teachers will not be able to provide work packets for students on vacation. Please schedule vacations and appointments outside of school hours whenever possible. It sends a clear message that you care about your child's education. If you plan a vacation outside of school vacations, please fill out [this form](#) in order for your child's absences to be excused. If you do not complete this form, the absences will be unexcused and could lead to your child being considered truant.

Will my child learn to read?

Your child will be taught early literacy skills based on the Maine Learning Results. This will include phonemic awareness, phonics, and listening comprehension. This will be achieved through a center based approach where activities can be differentiated based on the needs of the child.

Kindergarten students are assessed at the beginning of each year using the NWEA MAP Reading Fluency and Dyslexia Screener. This screener assesses students' phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition and language comprehension skills. The screener takes about 25 minutes for students to complete on the iPad. Students receive scores for each area giving their classroom

teacher information on what areas to focus their instruction.

If a student is “flagged” on this screener, it means their performance on the screener suggests that there are possible risk factors for reading difficulties. Being “flagged” does NOT indicate a diagnosis of any kind. However, it does inform us that we need to do some intervention either in the classroom or in a smaller group outside of the classroom with those students. We will monitor progress for those students to be sure that there isn’t something else going on that is impacting their learning in these areas. Parents will be contacted if there are reading concerns.

Do they need to know their letters before starting school?

NO! We take them where they are. It helps if your child has learned to listen, follow directions, and has a good attitude about school.

Does my child need to know how to write his/her name?

Many children start to write by learning how to write their name. If your child shows interest, please teach them to use lowercase letters within their name, NOT all capitals.

How can I help my child?

READ to your child at least once a day. Limit screen time. Practice cleaning up together, practice having a schedule or routine. Talk with your child’s teacher about your child’s likes, dislikes, learning styles, temperament.

How will I know how my child is doing?

Our calendars, newsletters, and websites/social media let you know what is happening at school. Report Cards come home in November, March and June. In addition, we have parent teacher conferences in the fall and spring. You can always reach your child’s teacher by phone, emails, and conferences anytime during the year. Contact us with any questions, no matter how big or small you think they may be. Talk with us. The better we know your children, the more we can help them.

Is there a procedure for dropping off students?

Students are dropped off in the circle. We ask that you pull up as far as possible and let your child out of the car. It is best if you stay in the car to keep the line moving.

ALL cars MUST access School Lane via Haley Road. Out of respect to our neighbors, please do not take the School Lane shortcut off of Pepperrell Rd/Rt 103 to get to school.

Is there a procedure for picking up students at the end of the day?

We dismiss the bus students first starting at 3:00. We ask that cars line up in 2 lines (starting at the Mitchell sign) at the top of the hill. After the buses clear the circle (about 3:10) we start to let cars come up. A staff member will call your child’s name over the walkie talkie and they will meet you where your car is in the circle.

Do you offer before-school or after-school care?

Before School/After School (PreK-3) - Champions hosts a before care program here at Mitchell School from 6am-8am and after care (Pre K - 3) from 3-6pm [Champions at Horace Mitchell Primary School in Kittery Point, ME](#), (207) 630-5405

After School (K-3 only)- The Kittery Community Center provides after school care and students are bused directly there from Mitchell School. Here is their website if you would like to learn more.
<https://kitterycommunitycenter.org/childcare/#SAFE-Afterschool>, 207-439-3800

We welcome you to Mitchell School and want to assist you in this big transition for your child and family. If there are any questions that were not answered in these FAQs, please call and ask!