Watchung School
Parent-Student
Handbook
2026 - 2027

1 Fisher Avenue
Middlesex, NJ 08846

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https://wtg.mbschools.org/

Mrs. Karen L. Dudley, Principal

Watchung Elementary School

1 Fisher Avenue
Middlesex, NJ 08846

KAREN DUDLEY
Principal

732-317-6000 EXT. 25602
dudleyk@middlesex.k12.nj.us

Dear Watchung School Families,

Welcome to Watchung School, home of the Watchung Whales! We are home to students in kindergarten through third grade. As a school we are devoted to meeting the needs of your student(s) through positive and engaging learning experiences. We also believe that a combination of social, emotional and academic growth are the keys for optimal student learning.

The Watchung School Parent-Student Handbook is a reference that provides detailed information regarding school policies and procedures, programs, health services and school activities. You will also find other helpful information in the handbook which will guide you throughout the school year.

Our partnership with the families of Watchung students is extremely important. Please reach out at any time with questions or concerns! I can be reached by email dudleyk@middlesex.k12.nj.us or by phone at (732) 317-6000 ext. 25602.

The staff and I welcome you to our Watchung School family and look forward to an enjoyable and successful school year with you and your child(ren).

Warmest regards,

Karen L. Dudley

Mrs. Karen L. Dudley
Principal

WATCHUNG SCHOOL
PARENT – STUDENT HANDBOOK

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2026

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Middlesex Board of Education Affirmative Action Policy:

It is the policy of the Middlesex Board of Education to provide equal educational and employment opportunities regardless of sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, handicap, or social and economic status. Direct all inquiries to:

Affirmative Action Officer
Middlesex Public Schools
300 Kennedy Blvd.
Middlesex, New Jersey 08846
(732) 217-6000 Ext. 21620

WATCHUNG SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The Watchung School Mission is to provide all students with a positive challenging environment which empowers them to become responsible, enthusiastic and productive citizens of their community.

Working as a collaborative team, the students, staff, administration, parents and community, commit themselves to developing the social, emotional, academic and physical well-being of all children. By developing critical thinking skills, communicated through literacy, fine arts, mathematics, technology and the sciences, the school is responsive to changes in the school family, community and world.

We strive for Watchung students to demonstrate:

- Positive self-esteem, self-discipline, self-expression and responsibility
- Effective communication, social and leadership skills, including tolerance and respect for their peers and differences
- Critical/creative thinking, problem solving, decision making and risk taking
- Information literacy through the use of technology
- Individual and group excellence and a desire for life-long learning
- Readiness for college and/or career
- Balance of time management
- Community and global awareness
- Proficiency of the New Jersey State Standards

The Watchung School Staff

The professional staff of Watchung School is a source of great pride for the school community. Our teachers have been carefully selected for excellence in academic credentials and experience. In addition to their regular responsibilities, our staff is constantly reviewing and fine tuning existing programs and often creating new ones.

Karen Dudley	Principal
Patti Esposito	Secretary
Morgan Hydo	Nurse
Lori Taborelli	Kindergarten
Evy Palavros	Kindergarten
Amanda McKeon	1st Grade
Kelly Slobodien	1st Grade
Angela Sudzus	1st Grade
Jeff Johnson/Samantha Barone	2nd Grade
Samantha Bonsall	2nd Grade
Morgan Douglas	2rd Grade
Robin Meola	3rd Grade
Catherine Schilp	3rd Grade
Lauren Sillib	3rd Grade
Karen Emmons	Resource Room
Caitlin Neocleous	Learning/Language Disabilities
Pilar Aguilar	Teacher Assistant
Maria Rivera	Classroom Aide
Alissa Ricci	English as a Second Language Teacher
Ericka Arias	Spanish Teacher
Agata Drapala	Art Teacher
Tom MacMath	Physical Education Teacher
Haley Rogers	Music Teacher
Mindy Durkin	What I Need Instruction (WIN)
Jeanette Pine	What I Need Instruction (WIN)
Candace Acker	STEAM Teacher
Kathleen Rankin	Speech Teacher
Anne Erchick	Library Assistant
Leslie Kauffman	School Counselor
Julie Beauregard	Child Study Team Member
Lacey Wallace-Czirjak	Child Study Team Member
Amy Ash	Child Study Team Member
Doreen Mazza	Lunch Aide
Andrea Drennan	Lunch Aide
Nancy Cochrane	Lunch Aide
Sandra Bell	Lunch Aide
Johnny Castaneda	Head Custodian
Bertha Gonzalez Ospina	Night Custodian

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Class Work/Homework:

Homework is an integral part of your child's educational process. Homework brings the school and home closer together. As the school and home share most of the responsibility for education in the years ahead, cooperation between home and school is even more imperative to develop a sound and sensible educational program for the student.

PARENT SUPPORT and HELP IS ESSENTIAL

Parent support and supervision of homework is an extremely important factor in building positive attitudes and study habits regarding homework. The following suggestions are designed to facilitate our student's learning responsibility for homework without creating family conflict:

- Demonstrate that homework is a priority in your family by establishing a regular time to develop a daily "homework habit".
- Parents should provide the support and supervision necessary to see that their child organizes and completes homework for return on the due date.
- Avoid family arguments or power struggles over homework. If a concern or conflict occurs, please send a note to the teacher with the uncompleted homework explaining the problem. If continuing problems occur regarding homework assignments (takes too long, too difficult, tremendous frustration) please contact your child's teacher.
- Arrange a quiet environment for homework that is a private, personal area, rather than a "public area like the family room or kitchen. Provide a table or desk, chair, proper lighting and an area free from distractions such as radio, television, phone or conversations.
- Parents should be available to assist a child with homework, but the proper role is that of **consultant**. Parents should not complete the assignment for the child. Parents who participate in the "actual doing" of their child's homework dilute whatever academic learning was intended but, more importantly, cause the child to become dependent upon their continued presence and help where homework is concerned.
- Teach independence by encouraging your child to persevere and complete the assignment without assistance. If your child has given his/her all and is stuck, then step in as a consultant. Help should be brief! Parents can give examples, clarify directions, and provide guidance and support, but should not actually do any of the homework for their child. Parents should be available to help only if the student asks of his or her own initiative, resisting the urge to interrupt or ask, "Need any help?" There will be specific homework assignments that require parent participation and family involvement is appropriate.
- Encourage reading for pleasure. Either read to your child or provide a set time for individual reading every day.
- Encourage your child to report progress to you on long-term assignments. Help them divide the project into manageable segments and have them report their progress along the way.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

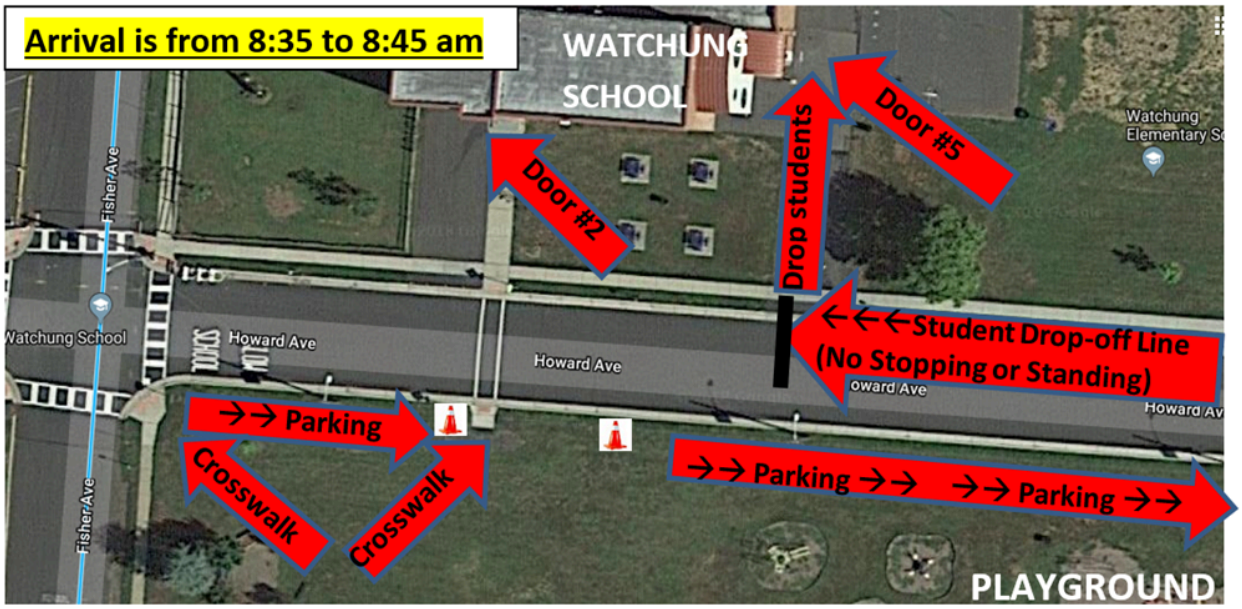
REGULAR SCHOOL DAY HOURS: 8:35 a.m. to 3:10 p.m.
Parent Drop Off begins at 8:35 a.m. and ends at 8:45 a.m.

School Arrival Time

- **Please do not drop off or bring your child before 8:35**. If you and your child arrive at school early, you or the caregiver **must** wait with the child and supervise them accordingly.
- If your child is coming to school after 8:45 a.m., he/she will be marked tardy. If it is unavoidable to be late, please bring your child into the school to sign them in at the main office. Coming to school late is disruptive for all. It is very important for the educational process to get your child off to a good start by being on time.

Morning Arrival Procedures

- Doors will open at 8:35 and students will enter the school and proceed to the classrooms.
    - **Door #2 (Kindergarten/Grade 1)**
    - **Door #5 (Grade 2, Grade 3 & LLD)**
- Parents may not escort children into the building. Entrance doors close at 8:45 and students who arrive after that time must enter through the front of the building, escorted by an adult, and be signed in as tardy.



- Please see the image above for morning arrival. The school side of Howard Ave is for **active and continuous student drop off only**. Students must be dropped off in the dropoff "cut-in" on the school side of Howard Ave near the driveway apron at the rear of the building. Please do not park on the school side of Howard Ave. If you would like to park and walk your child to the entrance door, please use the playground side of the street or one of the other side streets. All parents/students should utilize the crosswalks for their safety. As an additional reminder, the arrival doors open at 8:35 am and close promptly at 8:45 am. Students should not be dropped off on school grounds prior to 8:35 am as there is no staff supervision available.

Dismissal Procedures (Middlesex BOE Policy 8601)

- Dismissal is at 3:10 pm and students will be dismissed as follows;
    - **Door # 2 - Mrs. Palavros, Miss Taborelli**
    - **Door #5 -Ms. Sillib, Mrs. Meola, Miss Schilp, Mrs. Neocleous**
    - **Door # 6 - Miss Sudzus, Miss McKeon, Miss Slobodien**
    - **Door #10 - Mr. Johnson(Mrs. Barone), Mrs. Bonsall, Mrs. Douglas**

- Please utilize street parking on the playground side of Howard Avenue or the adjacent side streets. Vehicles should not part on the school side of the street. Any time crossing the street, please utilize the crosswalk or crossing guard.
- Parents/caregivers are asked to please stand away from the doors, so that students may exit safely. Please allow the children to completely exit the building. The children are instructed to stand with their teacher until the teacher sees their caregiver. If the student does not see a caregiver at pickup, he/she will be escorted back into the building.
- Students who are not picked up from school in a timely manner will be escorted to the main office and parents/emergency contacts will be called. Should late pick-up occur frequently the Middlesex Police Department may be asked to assist.
- No student shall leave the school before the end of the regular school day without permission. Parents/Guardians wishing to release their child(ren) before the end of a school day shall report to the office and **show valid identification** (ie. Driver's License) that matches the guardians/contacts in Genesis in order to sign their child out of school.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS/DELAYED OPENINGS/EARLY DISMISSAL

Inclement weather may necessitate the closing, early closing or delayed opening of school. You will receive alerts from the Middlesex Borough School District to notify you of any closings or delayed openings. You may also contact the Middlesex Police Department or check the Middlesex School website. Listed below are the schedules and time for delayed openings and early dismissal.

Delayed Opening Schedule (90 Minute) – **No Before Care or Breakfast program**
Grades K-3 10:05 AM-3:10 PM
Parent Drop Off begins at 10:05 a.m. and ends at 10:15 a.m.

Early Dismissal Schedule (**No Lunches Served**)
Grades K-3 8:35 AM-1:00 PM

VISITORS (Middlesex BOE Policy 9150)

- Visitors are asked to use the front entrance of the building.
- Upon arrival at the school, **all visitors, including parents, must report to the main office, sign-in with the secretary and receive a visitor's badge.**
- The visitor policy applies to volunteers assisting in the building with events and parents entering the building for any other reasons.
- At the conclusion of the visit, visitors should report back to the office to sign-out.
- Parents are requested to schedule conferences with teachers or the principal through the main office.
- ***Any items dropped off for a student or a class should be left on the drop off table in the vestibule labeled with the child's name and teacher. The secretary will be sure that the item(s) is delivered to the student.***

CROSSING GUARDS are the responsibility of the Middlesex Police Department. They are posted as follows:

Regular School Day

Howard Avenue and Fisher Avenue	7:30-8:45 & 2:30-3:30
Harris Avenue and Fisher Avenue	7:30-8:45 & 2:30-3:30
Union Avenue and Lorraine Avenue	7:30-8:45 & 2:30-3:30

Early Dismissal Times

Howard Avenue and Fisher Avenue	7:30-9:00 & 12:15-1:15
Harris Avenue and Fisher Avenue	7:30-8:45 & 12:15-1:15
Union Avenue and Lorraine Avenue	7:30-8:45 & 12:15-1:30

Delayed Opening Times

Howard Avenue and Fisher Avenue	9:30-10:15 & 2:30-3:30
Harris Avenue and Fisher Avenue	9:30-10:15 & 2:30-3:30
Union Avenue and Lorraine Avenue	9:30-10:15 & 2:30-3:30

ATTENDANCE (Middlesex BOE Policy 5200)

Regular Attendance is one of the most important factors in a student being able to maintain satisfactory academic achievement. Please contact the Attendance Line to report your child absent or late.

Attendance Line information to report your child absent or tardy;

1. **Contact the Main Office using the Attendance Line - 732-317-6000 extension 25603 by 9:15. Please note that although you may have notified your child's teacher that they will be absent or tardy, it's best to also contact the Attendance Line as well. Teachers may not have the opportunity in the morning to forward your message to the Main Office.**
2. **This number is for attendance only. If you have any questions, need to pick your child up early or need to speak to the Secretary you will use the main number 732-317-6000, extension 25602.**
3. **You may also write a message in the Genesis Parent Portal if your child will be absent or late. If your child will be late, and ordering lunch, it's best to call the Main Office.**

LATE ARRIVAL AND EARLY DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS (Middlesex BOE Policy 5230)

Students should be on time for school. Being late causes a disruption to the learning process in your child's class. Please make every effort to be sure your child arrives at school on time. If your child is late an adult must accompany the child into the building and sign the child into school. **If you know your child will be late you may contact the main office to notify them as well as ordering your child's lunch if they will be in after 9:30**. Parents should request an early dismissal only if it is absolutely necessary. Students requiring an early dismissal **must bring in a note or have a parent contact the main office in advance** so your child will be ready for you when you arrive. A student will not be permitted to leave early unless he/she is met in the office by the parent, guardian, or designated person.

LOST AND FOUND

Students who have lost items should check the lost and found container located in the lower level of Watchung. **Parents are strongly encouraged to label all personal items to avoid loss of items.**.

SCHOOL TELEPHONES

The telephone in the main office may be used for emergencies only.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBER OR EMAIL

Any change of address needs to be done with the attendance officer, Matt Benderoth. You can contact him at 732-317-6000 ext. 22664. **Also, as most important information is emailed to the community, any changes in email should be made with the main office so our systems are up to date.** Please immediately report any changes of information on the emergency form to the school office.

CHANGE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT

When moving during the school year or over the summer, please notify the main office as soon as possible. Documents need to be completed to sign your child out of the district and obtain the transfer card needed to register at the new school.

Please note that you cannot register your child at a new school before transferring out of the Middlesex School District.

PARKING

Please be advised that the following information related to traffic and parking in and around Watchung School is being provided so that all will be able to ensure the welfare and safety of our students. The Middlesex Police Department has been working with us to develop these guidelines and regulations and will be enforcing them for our students' safety.

PARKING, STOPPING AND STANDING, CROSSWALKS

- The lot will be one-way from Howard to Lorraine and is intended for staff parking only.
- The school side of Howard Ave is reserved for continuous morning drop-off only. Vehicles are not permitted to park at any time on the school side of Howard Avenue.
- Should you wish to park and escort your child to the school grounds, you may do so on the playground side of Howard ave and MUST cross the street using the designated crosswalks. Do not allow or encourage your child(ren) to run across the street. Additionally, drop-off and pick-up may not occur on Fisher Avenue.
- Howard Avenue will be closed to vehicular traffic from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. each day. This is an ordinance that was passed by the Borough Council. Violators will be ticketed (a moving violation).
- Bus students will be dropped off and picked up on the school side of Fisher Avenue.
- Students are to cross only at the designated crosswalks. We need full parent cooperation to instill this safety practice! Please model this for your children. Students are to proceed to the cross walk with the crossing guard. Parents and caregivers must get out of the car to cross the child across the street in designated crosswalk areas. **This is a very important safety rule—children are not to run across the street at any time.** Please do not double park your car in the middle of the street to let children in or out of the car. The Middlesex Police Department will be monitoring the traffic and violations will be issued.
- Parking or vehicular traffic is not permitted at any time in the driveway behind Watchung School or the black top area near door #2. **The blacktop drive is NOT to be used at any time.**

Middlesex Community School Before and After Care:

The Middlesex Community School will offer before and after care for a fee. A registration form and additional information can be found on the Middlesex School District website at www.mbschools.org Community School tab.

EMERGENCY DRILLS/FIRE DRILLS:

Fire drills and Emergency Drill will be conducted unannounced two times a month: one fire and one emergency. Emergency drills include Shelter in Place, Lockdown, or Evacuation.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

The school is not responsible for any personal items that students bring to school. **Personal items such as toys, cell phones and smartwatches should not be brought to school.** Students may bring certain personal items for special class projects providing they have prior approval from their classroom teacher.

Any objects which are deemed to be dangerous to students or staff or potentially disruptive to the educational climate are not permitted in school. It should be clearly understood that WEAPONS of any kind, real or facsimile, should not be brought to school. It is important for parents to be aware of the definitions. "Weapon" includes, but is not limited to, all firearms, knives, dangerous instruments intended to inflict harm, components that can be readily assembled into a weapon, explosive devices, imitation firearms and anything readily capable of lethal use or of inflicting bodily injury. As specific examples, the following items are considered weapons or a disruption to the educational climate and are not permitted on school property:

- pocket knives
- pointed or sharp tools
- fireworks/groundworks (snaps, sparklers, bottle rockets, etc.)
- water guns
- apple watches or anything similar
- cell phones (need to be kept in back pack until dismissal)

The above items are not appropriate in a school environment. Students who possess or use such objects will have them confiscated and may be subject to disciplinary action.

BICYCLES/SKATEBOARDS/ROLLER BLADES/SCOOTERS

Students in grade 3 are permitted to ride their bicycles to school. However, the school is not responsible for damage or theft of any bicycle left on school property during school hours. Parents are reminded that New Jersey Law requires that all riders must wear a certified bicycle helmet while riding their bicycle to school. The following is a set of guidelines all students are expected to follow. Failure to follow these rules may result in a loss of bicycle privileges. Students may not bring skateboards, roller blades, scooters to school.

- All students riding a bicycle to school must wear a certified bicycle helmet.
- All bicycles must be walked on school property.
- All bicycles must be placed, and locked, in the bicycle racks.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

School buildings, grounds, equipment and supplies are a public trust, supported and maintained by public funds. It is the responsibility of all students to care and respect school property. This includes the care and use of textbooks, supplies, equipment, school property and building/grounds. The following are guidelines that students should follow:

- **Lost or damaged books** will be the responsibility of the student. Fines will be assessed if necessary.
- **Do not mark on school property** – Students should not write on their desks, walls or other school property.
- **Use proper waste receptacles** – It is expected that students use the trash receptacles throughout the building.

Students who damage or vandalize school property will be held responsible for all damages. Parents will be notified the day of the occurrence.

SCHOOL ATTIRE (Middlesex BOE Policy 5511 - Dress and Grooming)

Students at Watchung School are expected to dress in a manner which reflects well on their school, parents, community and themselves and does not cause a disruption to the school day. Please remember to dress your children in safe and comfortable clothing appropriate for the weather. Students go outside for recess and Physical Education every day, weather permitting. During the fall and winter months, please make sure that your child wears a coat, hat and gloves. Do not send children to school in bare feet, unsafe footwear, cleated shoes or other shoes intended for the beach. Students may not wear sneakers with wheels to school or any clothing that is likely to create a disruption to the school environment.

REPORT CARDS (Middlesex BOE Policy 2624 - Grading System)

Report cards are posted online and can be accessed through the Genesis Parent Portal. Report cards are posted four times a year, at the end of each marking period, for grades 1-3. Kindergarten students will have report cards posted three times during the school year. Please see the back of the Middlesex Public Schools calendar for report card dates. Any parent who has questions or concerns regarding their child's grades should call the school office to arrange an appointment with the teacher. If you need a paper copy of your child's report card, please contact the Main Office for assistance.

GENESIS PARENT PORTAL

At the elementary level, parents/guardians sign into the Genesis Parent Portal to view student's grades and attendance. Information regarding the Genesis Parent Portal is distributed at the beginning of the school year. If you need assistance logging on, please contact the Main Office.

It is critical we have your current, correct email address as this will be your log-on information and will also be used to notify you of other important information, including the Watchung Weekly Update and the District e-blasts from the Superintendent. If your email changes, please notify the Main Office immediately.

PUPIL RECORDS

A student's school records generally contain information about the student's academic and personal progress through the school experience. There are four major issues which arise regarding school records:

Content:

By law, only certain information may be kept in a student's school record, such as the student's address, age, sex, citizenship, attendance records, report cards, and medical records. Teacher observations and results of standardized tests are permitted but not required.

Access:

It is the parent's/guardian's right to access their child's pupil records. The parent can see, take notes on, and make copies of all school records that relate to the student. However, notes made by a teacher or other school district employees for his/her own memory or personal use are not considered to be part of a student's records unless they have been used or reviewed by other school personnel.

A student may see his/her own record after he/she reaches the age of 18. Until that time, the parent's consent is required or access may be granted in an emergency by certified school personnel if, in their judgment, such access is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student.

Confidentiality:

No one may see a student's school record without the permission of the student's parent except certain certified school personnel, accrediting organizations, staff of the State Department of Education, state protective services, and bonafide researchers who have provided the superintendent of schools with prior written assurance "that the records will be used under strict conditions of anonymity and confidentiality."

Challenging Your Child's Records:

The law also permits parents, by written request, to challenge and/or have corrected or removed any information in a student's record that is improper, inaccurate or incomplete. If the school and parent cannot come to an agreement as to what information should be in the record, the parent may appeal the matter to the Superintendent. Within 10 days of notification, the superintendent, or his designee, shall meet with the parents to review the issues set forth in the appeal. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, the parent may appeal this decision to the Board of Education or the Commissioner of Education within ten days. The decision will be rendered within twenty days.

HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Watchung School and PTO updates will be sent home in a newsletter typically posted on the school website and Class Dojo. This update will notify you of what has taken place at school and important information that you may need. Within the newsletter will be any weekly notices or flyers. Please set your notifications so that you receive these important updates from Watchung School. The newsletter will help ensure you have information needed for the upcoming

week(s). This electronic update enhances and increases the Home to School communication in a timely, organized fashion as well as reduces paper costs and waste. While we would like every notice to go home electronically, there will be instances where paperwork must be sent home due to necessity or because it is vendor specific. Please check your child's Homework Folder daily as well as every Friday. Watchung School's website is another great resource to find out more information. https://wtg.mbschools.org/

PARENT - TEACHER CONFERENCE:

The most valuable form of evaluation for parents/guardians is the conference. The teacher will provide information as to how your child is doing in all areas of study; will answer your questions or concerns; and, possibly, offer suggestions for your child's growth. You may also review samples of your child's work. Afternoon parent conferences are scheduled and, for the convenience of working parents, the school has scheduled a date for evening parent conferences. (Please see the school calendar for specific dates.) **Please note:** conferences may be scheduled at the request of a parent or teacher at any time during the school year.

COMMUNICATION:

Concerns, comments and suggestions from parents are welcome. Issues regarding your individual child should first be communicated to the teacher through written notes, phone calls or a conference. If further action is deemed necessary, parents are encouraged to contact the principal.

COMPUTER USAGE: (Middlesex BOE Policy (2361)

Watchung School provides computer instruction and utilizes computer programs to assist students with instruction. Computers are located in each classroom.

ANIMALS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY (Middlesex BOE Policy 7490)

Pets are not permitted on Board of Education property.

SMOKING ON SCHOOL PROPERTY (Middlesex BOE Policy 5533)

Smoking is not permitted on Board of Education property.

DISCIPLINE (Middlesex BOE Policy 5600 - Pupil Discipline/Code of Conduct)

The rules and regulations at Watchung School are established to create an atmosphere in which teaching and learning can take place and to provide a safe environment for students and staff. Education cannot take place without discipline. Good discipline is the presence of a friendly atmosphere in which students, teachers and administration are all equally respected and work toward common goals. In general, students who exercise good common sense and are considerate of others will not have problems complying with the rules and regulations. In instances where students do not comply with specified rules, he/she may be removed from the classroom, cafeteria, or playground. Students who do not comply with the rules and regulations will have disciplinary action taken against them to modify behavior. An individual behavior improvement plan may be necessary. Parental cooperation is expected and appreciated in these situations.

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

School Nurse:

The services of a certified school nurse are available daily at Watchung School. The nurse provides emergency care to those who are injured or become ill during the school day and contacts the home in the case of an emergency. The nurse is also responsible for the appraisal of the health status of pupils through screening tests for vision, hearing, etc.; referral and follow-up of medical defects; prevention and control of communicable diseases; and counseling and interpreting health problems to school personnel, pupils, and parents/guardians. Families are encouraged to share with the nurse any concerns about the student. Parents will play an important role in the school's health program by observing the following:

- Do not send your child to school if he/she is ill in the morning.
- Be prepared to provide transportation home if you are notified that your child is sick at school.
- If your child contracts a contagious disease or is likely to be absent from school for three or more days, please be sure to notify the school nurse.

- If a child has a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, please keep the child home for a period of 24 hours **without fever** before returning to school.
- If a child is experiencing vomiting or diarrhea, please keep the child home for a period of 24 hours **without vomiting or diarrhea** before returning to school.
- Any child diagnosed with strep throat needs to be on medication for a 24 hour period before returning to school with a physician's note.
- If your child is absent from school, please have him/her refrain from entering the school building during the day or for evening activities.
- If your child is sent home for contracting lice, he/she will not be readmitted until the child has been examined by the School Nurse. This is in compliance with the Board of Education Policy.

Administration of Medication (Middlesex BOE Policy 5330)

No medication will be administered to pupils except by the school nurse, another registered nurse, or the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian (s) acting on a written order from the pupil's private physician or the school medical inspector. A written request for the administration of medication at school must be approved by the principal. Medication must be delivered to the school nurse by the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian (s) in the original container labeled by the pharmacy or physician.

Self-administration of medication by pupils is permitted in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.3. A pupil is only permitted to self-administer medication for asthma, diabetes or other potentially life-threatening illnesses as defined by the Department of Education, New Jersey Statutes Annotated and New Jersey Administrative Code. Permission for self-administration of medication must comply with the conditions set forth in Regulation No. 5330.

If your child is asthmatic and needs to keep an inhaler in school, please notify the school nurse. The parent/guardian of any child with a chronic medical condition requiring daily medication (even if not administered during school hours) must notify the school nurse.

Emergency Verification Forms:

Each child must have an Emergency Verification Form on file. This form must be up-to-date information and include the parent/guardian's daytime address and phone number, cell phone number, current email address, the student's physician's name and number and the name of an emergency contact person when the parent cannot be reached. **It is critical that any changes made to the Emergency Verification Form during the school year be reported to the Nurse and Main Office immediately.**

Medical Excuses from Physical Education:

Medical notes from physicians excusing students from Physical Education must be presented to the school nurse for processing. The note should include a diagnosis and the estimated length of time to be excused. The nurse is responsible for notifying the Physical Education instructor.

SCHOOL NUTRITION (Middlesex BOE Policy 8505): Elementary School Nutrition and Wellness Guidelines

The Middlesex Board of Education's Nutrition Policy promotes healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition and physical activity. This policy is based upon legislation passed by Congress in 2004 which required schools to develop and implement wellness policies that address nutrition and physical activity. **According to this policy the following items may not be served, sold, or given out as free promotion anywhere on school property at any time before the end of the school day:**

1. Foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV) as defined by U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations;
2. All food and beverage items listing sugar, in any form, as the first ingredient; and
3. **All forms of candy.**

In support of this policy our Elementary Wellness Committee, composed of parents, teachers, nurses and administration, established guidelines for celebrations that are held during school hours. In addition, because we have many students who

have food allergies, the guidelines address concerns about the safety of these students when food is served. By promoting positive dietary and lifestyle practices, schools can facilitate learning and optimize student performance.

DAILY CLASSROOM SNACK

Students in grades K-3 will have a time scheduled for a daily snack in their classroom. Snacks must be provided from home and are to be nut/peanut free. Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle to drink. Water fountains/bottle filling stations are located throughout the school

There are three school celebrations per school year where food may be served (Fall, Winter and Year End):

Your child's classroom teacher will collaborate with the classroom parents and school nurse to select the foods to be served at these celebrations. **ONLY FOODS FROM THIS LIST WILL BE ACCEPTED.** Unapproved foods will be returned. Certain items from the snack list may be eliminated for specific food allergies within their classes.

APPROVED PARTY SNACK LIST

There are specific brand names on this list because, at present, they are considered safe from peanuts. Store brands should not be used. These snacks are free from nuts but may contain other allergens. Labels should always be checked carefully. **FOODS THAT ARE LABELED *"MADE IN A FACILITY THAT HANDLES NUTS"* MAY NOT BE USED.**

FRUITS	**VEGETABLES**
Fresh fruits: apples, grapes, oranges, pears, strawberries, bananas, melon Dole Fruit Bowls Del Monte Fruit to go cups Sun-Maid Raisins Fruit juices should be 100% juice	Veggies and dip (carrots, celery, broccoli, cauliflower, cucumbers, peppers, squash, snow peas, tomatoes (grape type)
CRACKERS	**SALTY SNACKS**
Frito Lay—Sun Chips Honey Maid—Cinnamon Grahams & sticks, Honey Grahams & sticks Kellogg's --Teddy Grahams, Nutri Grain Bars Keebler—Wheatables, Town House Crackers, Vanilla Wafers Nabisco—Graham Crackers, Saltines, , Ritz Crackers, Triscuits, Vanilla Wafers Wheat Thins Pepperidge Farm--Gold Fish Rice Krispie---Treats Sunshine—Cheese-its	Rold Gold Pretzels Snyders of Hanover Pretzels Healthy Choice, Orville Redenbacher, Pop-Secret Popcorn (No butter) Skinny Pop Original Popcorn Sea salt veggie straws (Good & Gather - Target)
FROZEN TREATS	**Miscellaneous**
Minute Maid—juice bars & cream Swirls Good Humor—Fudgesicles Nestle—Rainbow Sherbert Treats & Juicy Juice Frozen Juice Pops Tropicana Fruit Juice Bars Welch's Fruit Juice Popsicles Luigi's Italian Ice	Cheese—string cheese, cheese cubes Hunt's Vanilla & Chocolate Pudding Jello—Vanilla & Chocolate Pudding Kraft—Vanilla & Chocolate Pudding Yogurt (NOT soy brands)

STUDENT BIRTHDAYS

Students may celebrate individual birthdays at school however, **NO FOOD OR GOODY BAGS** may be sent to school. Your child's teacher will have a list of special activities that your child may choose from to celebrate his/her birthday. This may include activities such as having a parent come in to read to the class; selecting a gift from a treasure box; birthday crown or banner displayed; extra gym; teacher's special helper for the day.

Party invitations may be handed out in school **ONLY** if one of the following applies:

- The ENTIRE class is invited
- ALL boys are invited
- ALL girls are invited

MEAL PROGRAM (Middlesex BOE Policy: 8550 - Unpaid Meal Charges/Outstanding Food Service Charges)

BREAKFAST: Cost 1.95 (reduced cost available for qualifying applicants)
Breakfast is available to all students starting at 8:20 - and ending at 8:35, every morning, **except delayed openings.** Sign up for breakfast is not necessary. Students will enter through the main entrance of the school and proceed to the multipurpose room. Please note that if your child comes to eat breakfast, they must eat breakfast. **The breakfast program is not an alternative to before care.**

Elementary LUNCH: Cost 3.80 (reduced cost available for qualifying applicants)
The school provides a complete lunch daily, including milk. Students are permitted to bring their lunch from home. All students will eat lunch in the multipurpose room. Students may either bring their lunch, order a school lunch, or purchase a milk or snack. If a student is purchasing a snack or milk, parents are to either provide money for the purchase of the snack or milk or deposit funds into the child's **Lunch** account through **PAYSCHOOLS**, (which replaced "My School Bucks") **please note as of 8/21 the PAYSCHOOLS website is not connected to our network.** As snacks are NOT included in the meal program, snack and milk prices are listed on each monthly menu.

Please note: Students are not allowed to purchase more than one snack. Snacks are not always served on pizza day. **In addition, Kindergarten students may not be able to order snacks until mid-year.** This is to ensure that they have adequate time to adjust to the lunchroom procedures, especially having enough time to finish lunch. Your child's teacher will notify you when students will have the opportunity to purchase snacks.

Playground Procedures:

1. Students should wear appropriate clothing for playtime according to the season and the climate of the day. (no - flip flops, crocs or any type of slip on sandal will be allowed during recess or PE)
2. Students should observe safety rules at all times.
3. Students are not permitted to engage in any games or activities that involve rough play or pose a safety hazard.
4. Students are not to leave the playground area without the approval of the supervisor.
5. Students should exhibit proper behavior and good sportsmanship.
6. Students are not permitted to throw any objects (i.e., stones, acorns, sticks, snowballs, etc.) Appropriate playground equipment will be available for student use.
7. Chewing gum is not permitted.
8. Toys/games from home are not permitted.
9. Parents will be notified if a student continually fails to follow lunch/playground rules.

During inclement weather, the schedule remains the same and recess will be held indoors.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Use of School Building
Community groups, youth groups and other organized entities are encouraged to use the school building for worthwhile purposes. Interested persons should contact the Business Office (732-317-6000) for more information.

Evening Performances
Throughout the school year, many programs and activities are scheduled. Parents are encouraged to attend the evening activities. **Students who attend an evening program or activity must be accompanied by an adult and must have been present for the school day.**

School Sponsored Field Trips
Educational field trips are an integral part of our total school program. All students who participate in a field trip must have the proper field trip permission form completed prior to the scheduled event.

SUPPORT SERVICES

In keeping with the Watchung School's philosophy of developing all students to their full potential, several services are offered to support children with concerns or special needs.

School Counselor:
The School Counselor is available to help children who are having problems that may be affecting their schoolwork and/or behavior. The counselor offers a safe place to go when students are having a difficult day or need emotional support. A student may see the counselor once or on a regular basis, depending on the student's needs. When long-term counseling becomes necessary, parents are notified for their input and consent. The counselor's goal is to establish a positive relationship with the young people and their homes and thereby provide a more enriching school experience. In addition to individual sessions, the counselor runs small group workshops, peer mediation sessions, lunchtime support groups, and classroom mini-workshops. Areas of concern and discussion include school anxiety, separation, divorce, step-parents, handling grief and anger, drug/alcohol awareness, conflict resolution, etc.

The Child Study Team:
The Child Study Team (CST) identifies and evaluates students experiencing learning difficulties. Through classroom observation, along with consultation with students, parents, and staff, the CST determines pupil eligibility for Special Education and related services in accordance with state requirements. After this evaluation is completed, the team outlines plans for individual education programs to meet the student's needs. The CST is headed by the Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant (LDTC) and also includes the school social worker and school psychologist.

Speech/Language Therapy Program:
Watchung's Speech/Language Specialist works with students identified for Speech/Language services. Students meet regularly to work on listening skills, language development, speech articulation, voice improvement, and fluency. Vocabulary words used are often those found in classroom text so that Speech/Language learning can be incorporated with the classroom curriculum.

Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS):
The Watchung School Intervention and Referral Services is an interdisciplinary team consisting of teachers, the school nurse, and the building principal. The I&RS Committee meets monthly to design and monitor strategies for pupils who may be having difficulties. The I&RS Committee develops strategies for classroom teachers who feel that a team approach may be helpful in discussing and developing solutions to difficulties experienced by a student. This approach, based on sharing and caring, has been beneficial in helping many students experience success in the classroom.

Standardized Assessment
NJSLA testing is administered to students in grade 3 in the spring. These tests measure selected cognitive abilities of a relatively abstract nature that are important to success in an educational program. It measures understanding verbal and non-verbal concepts and comprehending relationships among ideas. It is important to keep test results in proper perspective. They are only one indication of the child's ability. Children who fall below state mandated scores may be eligible for Academic Support Instruction in Reading/ Language Art or Mathematics.

WIN "What I Need"
The Middlesex Public School system supports students who are having academic difficulty through the WIN "What I Need" Program. WIN teachers work with small groups of students to reinforce and pre-teach concepts that the student may find difficult. Students are enrolled in the program based upon standardized test results, pre-testing inventories, reading levels, and teacher/parent recommendations.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND THE WATCHUNG SCHOOL PTO

2026-2027 Executive Board

CO-PRESIDENTS - Mallory Horowitz & Kerri Kline

CO-VICE PRESIDENTS -Kaitlin Andres & Marissa Xinaropoulos Stopper

TREASURER - Melissa Perez & Open position

SECRETARY - Jackie Meininger & Kristin Sluke

SCHOOL PARENTS - Open Position

There are numerous opportunities for Watchung families to participate more fully in their children's school lives. The PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) is probably the most familiar parent organization but you may find that it has changed since your school days. The PTO is heavily involved in home/school communications and works hard to provide special events for our students: field day, assembly programs, and other extracurricular activities. The PTO also provides support and education for parents through workshops and social events. The PTO fund-raisers support these efforts as well as supplementing academic program materials and supplies.

Follow the PTO on Facebook at **The Parents of Watchung Elementary School PTO** to receive updates, reminders and to view signup sheets for volunteer opportunities or contact the PTO through email at watchungschoolpto@gmail.com.

Quick Links to Key Policies:

- Policy 1510 Rights of Persons with Handicaps or Disabilities/Policy on Non-Discrimination
- Regulation 1510 Rights of Persons with Handicaps or Disabilities/Policy on Non-Discrimination
- Policy 1530 Equal Employment Opportunities
- Regulation 1530 Equal Employment Opportunities
- Policy 2200 Curriculum Content
- Policy 2260 Affirmative Action Program for School and Classroom Practices
- Regulation 2260 Affirmative Action Program for School and Classroom Practices
- Policy 2361 Acceptable Use of Computers
- Regulation 2361 Acceptable Use of Computers
- Policy 2624 Grading System
- Regulation 5200 Attendance
- Policy 5305 Health Services Personnel
- Policy 5230 Late Arrival and Early Dismissal
- Policy 5330 Administration of Medication
- Regulation 5330 Administration of Medication
- Policy 5350 Pupil Suicide Prevention
- Regulation 5350 Pupil Suicide Prevention
- Policy 5511 Dress and Grooming
- Policy 5512 Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying
- Regulation 5512 Reporting Procedure-Hazing and-or HIB
- Policy 5516: Use of Electronic Communication Devices
- Policy 5300 Automated External Defibrillators (AED)
- Policy 5530 Substance Abuse
- Regulation 5530 Substance Abuse
- Policy 5533 Pupil Smoking
- Policy 5600 Pupil Discipline-Code of Conduct
- Regulation 5600 Pupil Discipline-Code of Conduct
- Policy 5615 Suspected Gang Activity
- Policy 5751 Sexual Harassment
- Regulation 5751 Sexual Harassment
- Policy 5755 Equity in Educational Programs and Services
- Policy 7420 Hygienic Management
- Regulation 7420 Hygienic Management
- Policy 7422 School Integrated Pest Management Plan
- Policy 7430 School Safety
- Regulation 7430 School Safety
- Policy 7434 Smoking in School Buildings & on School Grounds
- Policy 7435 Alcoholic Beverages on School Premises
- Policy 7436 Drug Free Workplace
- Policy 7440 Security of School Premises
- Regulation 7440 Security of School Premises
- Policy 7490 Animals on School Property
- Policy 8420 Emergency & Crisis Situations
- Regulation 8420 Emergency & Crisis Situations
- Policy 8461 Reporting Violence, Vandalism, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, Alcohol and other Drug Abuse
- Regulation 8461 Reporting Violence, Vandalism, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, Alcohol and other Drug Abuse
- Policy 8462 Reporting Potentially Missing or Abused Children
- Regulation 8462 Reporting Potentially Missing or Abused Children
- Policy 8505 Wellness Policy & Nutrient Standards for Meals and other Foods
- Policy 8601 Pupil Supervision after Dismissal
- Policy 9320 Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies
- Regulation 9320 Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies
- IPM Information