

# Montgomery Township Elementary Schools



## Parent/Guardian and Student Handbook 2025-2026

## **About Orchard Hill Elementary School**

Orchard Hill Elementary School is home to students in preschool through second grade. We are devoted to meeting the needs of primary age children and implementing learning experiences that will start all children on a successful learning path.

The teachers and staff ensure positive learning environments that promote and value discovery, academic success and parental involvement. Literacy, numeracy, inquiry and character education are the foundations of all learning at our school. Our differentiated approach to instruction includes large group, small group and individual conferring that promotes student growth in developmentally appropriate ways.

In line with the philosophy of Responsive Classroom we believe that social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community is paramount for optimal student learning.

To learn more about our school and staff, visit the OHES website. The links across the top of the page provide access to important information about the school district, our school, staff, PTA, parent information and our staff webpages.

## **About Village Elementary School**

VES is committed to providing children in grades three and four with an academically challenging program in a nurturing and supportive environment. Our goal is to teach children to become independent learners and to help them apply skills developed in the primary grades.

The Village School staff, in partnership with parents and the greater Montgomery community, delivers a rich and differentiated program designed to prepare children to succeed as students and to become lifelong learners ready for a changing world.

The focus of our literacy program is to create fluent readers and writers whose command of language is exemplary. In mathematics and science, children flourish in an environment that is rich in problem solving and inquiry. They learn to ask as well as answer important questions. Children at Village School also have regular opportunities to continue to study art, music, world language and physical education. A special facet of the curriculum at Village School is the integrated use of technology to support classroom instruction.

Village School has an active and well-integrated social-emotional learning and character education program. Teachers create opportunities in all areas of the curriculum for students to examine and make good moral and ethical choices and employ the Responsive Classroom philosophy to build positive and collaborative classroom communities. Village School is also committed to developing an inclusive and culturally responsive environment that honors and embraces diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

Parent involvement at Village School is an important part of the school's culture. Because the PTA provides countless hours of volunteer service, Village Elementary School students are able to enjoy a tremendously enhanced program. We encourage you to become members and participants in our PTA. Please do not hesitate to contact us directly with any additional questions that you may have. We hope that you have a terrific school year with us.

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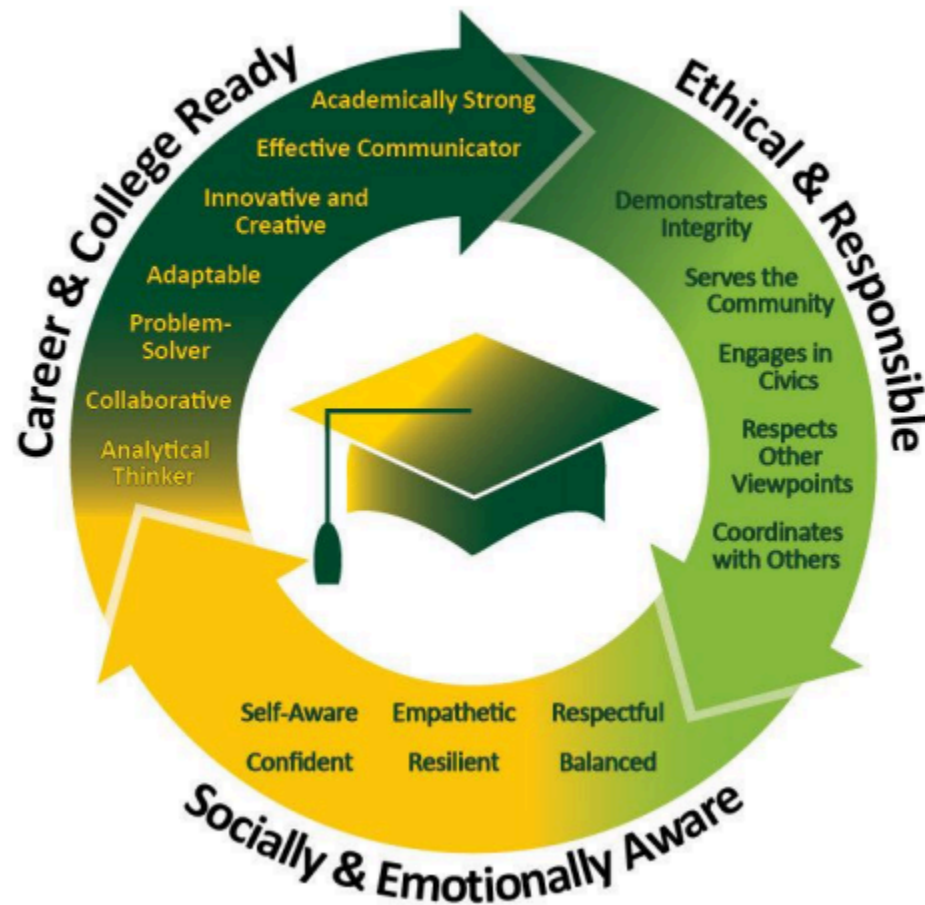
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## 1. Montgomery Township School District

*Mission: To empower every student to succeed in a diverse, dynamic, global society by providing quality educational experiences in a caring environment.*

*Vision: To be a premier school district in developing confident, compassionate, engaged learners.*

# Portrait of a Graduate



### Central Office Administration

Mrs. Mary McLoughlin, Superintendent

Mr. Damian Pappa, Assistant Superintendent

Mrs. Kelly Mattis, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

Mr. Andrew Italiano, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Ms. Fiona Borland, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Staff Development

Ms. Michele Deremer, Director of Special Services

Mr. Cory Delgado, Director of School Counseling and Student Wellness, District Anti-Bullying Coordinator

## 2. Orchard Hill Elementary School

### Contact Information

#### Main Office

Orchard Hill Elementary School  
244 Orchard Road  
Skillman, New Jersey 08558  
609-466-7605 (phone)  
609-466-7690 (fax)

Mr. Daniel Van Hise, Principal  
dvanhise@mtsd.us  
Mrs. Lisa Caudill, Assistant Principal  
lcaudill@mtsd.us

Mrs. Nora Kobylarz, Receptionist/Clerk  
Ms. Patricia Chidylo, Secretary  
Mrs. Denise Guaimano, Secretary

nkobylarz@mtsd.us , x1385  
pchidylo@mtsd.us , x1365  
dguaimano@mtsd.us , x1355

#### Health Office

Mrs. Rachelle Hanna, RN, CSN  
Ms. Claire Fazio  
609-466-7605, Option 3 (phone)

rhanna@mtsd.us  
cfazio@mtsd.us  
609-466-7193 (fax)

### School Anti-Bullying Contact Information

Ms. Wendy Gelinas, Mrs. Melissa Patane, Mrs. Amanda  
Huelbig  
School Anti-Bullying Specialist  
Orchard Hill Elementary School  
609-466-7605

### OHES School Counseling Office

Ms. Wendy Gelinas  
Mrs. Melissa Patane-Schulter  
Mrs. Amanda Huelbig

wgelinas@mtsd.us x1015  
mpatane@mtsd.us x1110  
ahuelbig@mtsd.us x1078

### OHES Pupil Services Office

#### Child Study Team

Rebecca Richards, School Psychologist  
Erika Seale, School Psychologist  
Jennifer Rogers, Social Worker  
Julia Belviso, Learning Consultant  
Secretary, Sarah Yi

rrichards@mtsd.us  
svorilas@mtsd.us  
jrogers@mtsd.us  
jbelviso@mtsd.us  
x1005

### 3. Village Elementary School

#### Contact Information

##### Main Office

Village Elementary School  
100 Main Boulevard  
Skillman, New Jersey 08558  
609-466-7606 (phone)  
609-466-7196 (fax)

Ms. Susan Lacy, Principal  
[slacy@mtsd.us](mailto:slacy@mtsd.us)  
Mrs. Jessica Glover, Assistant Principal  
[jglover@mtsd.us](mailto:jglover@mtsd.us)

Mrs. Marisa Narula, Secretary  
Mrs. Maureen Ocleppo, Secretary

[mnarula@mtsd.us](mailto:mnarula@mtsd.us), x2560  
[mocleppo@mtsd.us](mailto:mocleppo@mtsd.us), x2555

##### Health Office

Mrs. Patricia Cizin, RN, CSN  
Mrs. Yuen Tang, RN  
609-466-7606

[pcizin@mtsd.us](mailto:pcizin@mtsd.us)  
[ytang@mtsd.us](mailto:ytang@mtsd.us)  
609-466-7193 (fax)

#### VES Anti-Bullying Contact Information

Mrs. Lauren Fornal  
School Anti-Bullying Specialist  
100 Main Boulevard  
Skillman, New Jersey 08558  
609-466-7606 (option 5)  
[lfornal@mtsd.us](mailto:lfornal@mtsd.us)

Mrs. Jolene Schantz  
School Anti-Bullying Specialist  
100 Main Boulevard  
Skillman, New Jersey 08558  
609-466-7606 (option 5)  
[jschantz@mtsd.us](mailto:jschantz@mtsd.us)

#### VES School Counseling Office

Mrs. Lauren Fornal  
Mrs. Jolene Schantz

[lfornal@mtsd.us](mailto:lfornal@mtsd.us)  
[jschantz@mtsd.us](mailto:jschantz@mtsd.us)

#### VES Pupil Services Office

##### Child Study Team

Natalia Joffe, School Psychologist  
Ellen Stein, Social Worker 9/1-9/30  
Alexa Rapach, Social Worker 10/1 start date  
Leslie Alexander, Secretary

[njoffe@mtsd.us](mailto:njoffe@mtsd.us)  
[estein@mtsd.us](mailto:estein@mtsd.us)  
[arapach@mtsd.us](mailto:arapach@mtsd.us)  
[laalexander@mtsd.us](mailto:laalexander@mtsd.us)

## 4. K-4 Curriculum Supervisors

{In process}

Supervisor of Special Services PreK-2

Mrs. Regina Dunich

rdunich@mtsd.us

Supervisor of Special Services 3-6

Dr.. Amy Monaco

Supervisor of Language Arts and Social Studies K-4

amonaco@mtsd.us

Mrs. Danielle Stewart

Supervisor of Mathematics and Science K-4

dstewart@mtsd.us

Mr. Adam Warshafsky

Supervisor of Visual and Performing Arts K-12

awarshafsky@mtsd.us

Ms. Alma Reyes

Supervisor of World Languages and ESL K-12

areyes@mtsd.us

Mr. Jeff Brooks

Director of Instructional Technology

jbrooks@mtsd.us

## 5. Elementary School Hours and Schedule

### Regular Day

Grades K-4	9:35-3:55
AM PreK	9:35-12:15
PM PreK	1:15-3:55

### Emergency Dismissal (Snow Emergency, etc.)

Grades K-4	9:35-1:35
AM PreK	9:35-11:25
PM PreK	Canceled

### Early Dismissal

Grades K-4	9:35-1:35
AM PreK	9:35-11:25
PM PreK	11:55-1:35

### Delayed Opening (Snow Emergency, etc.)

Grades K-4	11:35-3:55
AM PreK	11:35-1:35
PM PreK	1:55-3:55

### Six-Day Cycle Schedule

Orchard Hill and Village Elementary Schools work on a six day cycle schedule for related arts classes. During the first few days of school, your child's teacher will inform you of the related arts classes that your child will have for each given day. A copy of the six day cycle schedule can be found on the school website. Look for the "Parents" drop down menu and select "Six Day Rotation Schedule" or use this [link](#).



### Delayed Openings and Emergency Closings

In the event of inclement weather, hazardous road conditions, or any other emergencies requiring us to close schools, you will receive a phone call/text message and email using the contact information listed in our student database system. You may also check the [district website](#).

After school activities are often canceled during an emergency closing. The organizations running these activities (ie. Y Program, Recreation Department, GGS, etc.) will communicate this to families of students attending these programs. Students attending these programs will be placed on their bus unless parents contact the school with alternate plans. If this is the case, please call the school at 609-466-7605 for OHES and 609-466-7606 for VES to speak with someone in the main office. Do not rely on sending an email to your child's teacher for this communication.

Plan now for how your family will respond to delayed openings and emergency closings. There should always be a backup plan that students can follow, and parents should discuss this with students periodically throughout the school year. *Having a plan in place in advance ensures the safety of all students and staff during an emergency.*

In the event of an emergency school closing, the six day cycle will remain unchanged. For example, if we have an emergency closing/snow day on Day 1, the following school day will remain Day 2. Missed days will be made up later in the school year. Please see the district calendar for details.

Lunch is still served on days where the school is on a delayed opening or early dismissal schedule.

## 6. Attendance

The Montgomery Township Board of Education requires students enrolled in Montgomery Township schools to attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the state. The consistent contact of students in the classroom with one another and their participation in a well-planned instructional activity under the direction of our faculty is vital to our students' success. Parents are encouraged to work in partnership with their children and school to minimize excessive or unnecessary absenteeism.

### Attendance (Policy 5200)

The Montgomery Township Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to provide a thorough and efficient education for every student within the district in keeping with the prevailing laws of the State of New Jersey. In order for administrators and teachers to successfully fulfill their responsibilities to students, it is essential that all students accept their responsibility to attend school as scheduled, and that parents/guardians support and reinforce their child's regular attendance.

To conform to state regulations requiring school districts to define "**excused**" and "**unexcused**" absences:

a. "An **unexcused absence** that counts toward truancy" is a student's absence from school for a full or a portion of a day for any reason that is not an "excused absence" as defined below.

b. "An **excused absence**" is a student's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for any absence for the reasons listed below:

1. The student's required attendance in court;
2. Where appropriate, when consistent with Individualized Education Programs, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, accommodation plans under 29 U.S.C. §§ 794 and 705(20), and individualized health care plans;

3. The student's suspension from school;
4. College visits, up to three days per school year, for students in grades 11 and 12;
5. Interviews with an admissions officer of an institution of higher education;
6. Examination for a driver's license;
7. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day with documentation from the doctor's office;
8. Take Our Children to Work Day;
9. Religious observance, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16;
10. Participation in observance of Veterans Day, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-13.2;
11. Participation in district board of election membership activities, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-33;
12. Closure of a busing school district that prevents a student from having transportation to the receiving school;
13. An absence considered excused by the Commissioner of Education and/or a New Jersey Department of Education rule.
14. An absence for a reason not listed above, not to exceed two days, but deemed excused by the principal upon a written request by the student's parent stating the reason for the absence and requesting permission for the absence to be an excused absence.

"Unexcused tardiness" may constitute an unexcused absence that counts toward truancy in accordance with Policy 5240.

For necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day, documentation from the doctor's office must be **on official office script pad or stationery-Must include duration of absences to be excused and date of appointment. \* All doctor's notes will be subject to the school's validation of the appointment date.**

An **"unexcused absence"** is a student's absence for all or part of a school day for any reason other than those listed above. Though a student may be absent with parental approval for reasons other than those listed above, the absence will be defined as verified but **unexcused**.

### **Notice to School of Student Absence**

Parents should report student absences in the Genesis Parent Resources application or call the attendance line at 609-466-7610 as early as possible to report an absence. **This does not "excuse" an absence but informs the school that your child is absent with your knowledge.** The student's absence will be deemed either **"excused"** or **"unexcused counting toward truancy"** "based upon the documentation explaining the reason for the absence(s) that is presented to the Main Office by the student following their return to school. The school will make every effort to contact parents/guardians of any absent student for whom a Genesis notification/phone call from home was not received.

To Report Your Child Absent...

- **To report an absence on [Genesis Parent Access](#) -\*Preferred\***
  - Click on attendance
  - Go to 'Notify Attendance Office' tab
  - Complete information and click 'submit to office'
- **To report an absence by phone:**

*Please include your child's first and last names, teacher name, absence length and reason for absence when calling.*

  - **Before 9:00 am:**
    - Call the District Attendance Hotline at 609-466-7610, Select option 7
    - For Orchard Hill Elementary School, select option 1
    - For Village Elementary School, select option 2

- **Between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm:** Call your child's school:
  - Orchard Hill: 609-466-7605, select option 2 to reach the main office.
  - Village Elementary : 609-466-7606, select option 2 to reach the main office.
- If you send an email to your child's teacher about an absence, it is important to still call one of the phone numbers listed above or email the main office secretaries to verify the absence.
- If your child will be absent from school for an extended period of time (i.e. vacation, visiting family, etc.) it is recommended that the family keep a daily journal and read during these times. **OHES and VES do not provide school work or supplies during these times.**
- Regular breaks are built into the school calendar. It is strongly recommended that families plan vacations during these times to avoid interruption to their child's learning.

**School Response to Unexcused Absences Counting Toward Truancy** N.J.A.C.6A:16-7.6, school staff responses for unexcused absences are as follows:

**For up to four cumulative unexcused absences counting towards truancy, the school district shall:** make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parents of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day; make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the student's parents; identify in consultation with the student's parents needed action designed to address patterns of unexcused absences, if any, and to have the child return to school and maintain regular attendance; proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10, if a potential missing or abused child situation is detected; and cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.

**For between five and nine cumulative unexcused absences counting towards truancy, the school district shall:** make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parents of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day; make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the students' parents; evaluate the appropriateness of prior action taken; develop an action plan to establish outcomes based upon the student's patterns of unexcused absences and to specify the interventions for supporting the student's return to school and regular attendance, which may include any or all of the following: refer or consult with the building's intervention and referral services team (I&RS), pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8; conduct testing, assessments, or evaluations of the student's academic, behavioral, and health needs; consider an alternate educational placement; make a referral to or coordinate with a community based social and health provider agency or other community resource; refer to a court or a court program; proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A.9:6-1 et. Seq. and N.J.A.C.6A:16-10, if a potentially missing or child abuse situation is detected: and engage the student's family. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.

**For cumulative unexcused absences counting towards truancy of 10 or more, a student between the ages of 6 and 16, is truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the school district shall:** make a determination regarding the need for a court referral for the truancy; continue to consult with the parent and the involved agencies to support the student's return to school and regular attendance; cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate; and proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:3828 through 31, Article 3B, Compelling Attendance at School, and other applicable State and Federal statutes, as required; and a court referral may be made as follows: when school officials determine unexcused absences education law, pursuant to **N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25**, and the district board of education's policies, the parent may be referred to municipal court; a written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student's attendance shall be forwarded to the municipal court; or when there is evidence of a juvenile-family crisis, pursuant to **N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-22.g**, the student may be referred to Superior Court, Chancery

Division, Family Part; a written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student's attendance shall be forwarded to the juvenile-family crisis intervention unit.

For a student with a disability, the attendance plan and disciplinary and remedial procedures shall be applied, where applicable, in accordance with the student's individualized education program, pursuant to 20 U.S.C 1400 et seq., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the procedural protections set forth in **N.J.A.C. 6A:14**; accommodation plan under 29 U.S.C. 794 and 705(20); and individualized healthcare plan and individualized emergency healthcare plan, pursuant to **N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3(b)5xii**.

**For families planning extended travel:** If a student is out of school for more than ten consecutive days without a medical reason, that student must be unenrolled by the school and re-registered with our [Registrar](#) upon return to the district. Please communicate your plans to the main office **and** the classroom teacher.

#### **To Check Your Child's Absences**

You can log in to your Parent Resources account to check your child's total absences. This is also where you will find letters from the school if your child reaches 4, 8, and 10+ cumulative unexcused absences or if your child has other absence patterns.

If you see a discrepancy in your child's attendance record, please contact:

- Orchard Hill Elementary School at 609-466-7605 or email Nora Kobylarz at [nkobylarz@mtsd.us](mailto:nkobylarz@mtsd.us) .
- Village Elementary School at 609-466-7606 or email Marisa Narula at [mnarula@mtsd.us](mailto:mnarula@mtsd.us).

If you have questions about your Parent Resources account, please contact Jaime Velez at [jvelez@mtsd.us](mailto:jvelez@mtsd.us)

#### **Making Up Work Following an Absence**

Upon a student's return to school, a student's classroom teacher will arrange for making up missed assignments with the student and his/her parent(s). Assessments will be made up during the school day. *If a student is absent for a non-health-related absence, school assignments and supplies cannot be sent home in advance.*

#### **Late Arrival to School**

Students are expected to be in school by 9:35 am during a normal school day. Students arriving after 9:35 am must be walked into the building and signed in at the Welcome Center in the main lobby (OHES) or the main office (VES) and will be marked as tardy.

#### **Early Dismissal from School**

A parent picking a student up early should come to the Welcome Center, in the main lobby, at OHES or the main office at VES, and a staff member will call the classroom to have your child come to the main lobby. The parent will sign-out the student. Students returning to school after signing out earlier in the day must re-enter via the Main Office and sign back in.

***If someone other than the parent or guardian is to meet the student, a note is required indicating the person has parent/guardian permission to pick up that particular child. Photo identification must be provided to office staff prior to signing out and releasing student.***

#### **Late Arrival & Early Dismissal Communication**

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to schedule doctor/dentist appointments before or after school hours. However, personal circumstances may arise requiring a student to arrive later to school or be released early from school. To ensure the smooth and safe handling of such situations, parents must send a physical note/Genesis message/email that includes:

- Date
- First and last name of student and the name of the teacher
- Reason for the early dismissal or late arrival(i.e. doctor/dentist appointment- doctor's/dentist's name, appointment time, and telephone number, etc.)
  - **Tardies will be identified as excused/unexcused using the same criteria as identified in the attendance section.**

## 7. Student Identification Cards

As part of our ongoing effort to increase safety, security and efficiency in our schools, all students in grades PK through 12 must wear their Montgomery Township School District Identification Card at all times on the exterior of their clothing, on the bus and when in the building or on school property. Students must have their ID in their possession when attending school-related activities (after school and on weekends). An ID is a school-issued item, which must be kept in the same condition in which it was issued.

Students will scan their ID barcodes upon entering and exiting their buses for bus attendance and to ensure that each student is on the correct bus. Additionally, these cards will be used in the cafeteria to pay for lunch and in the school library for book checkouts.

New cards will NOT be issued until after picture day each school year, so we kindly ask for your cooperation in ensuring that your child retains their ID card for use each September.

- If you are new to the district, please report to the main office to get your photo taken, and receive your ID
- In the event that any portion is lost (lanyard or ID card) there will be a \$5.00 replacement fee. Payment must be made through your PaySchools Account and you must fill out the below google form to alert the office:
  - VES [Google Form](#)
  - OHES [Google Form](#)

## 8. Busing

### Transportation Department

All students of Orchard Hill and Village Elementary Schools are provided with busing to and from school. Specific information about your child's bus route and number can be found on your Parent Resources account. Bus tags with important identification and bus route information will be provided to children at both schools during Open Houses. For OHES, please attach this tag to your child's backpack. At VES, students can add their bus tag to their student ID holder.

No student may ride on any bus other than his/her assigned bus nor may s/he leave the bus at any stop other than the assigned stop. It is preferred that all students are met by an adult at the bus stop at the end of the school day. Only students in PreK and Kindergarten will be brought back to the school if an adult is not at the bus stop at the end of the day. Please visit the [Transportation website](#) linked here, for important information.

Transportation Department  
Dwayne Washington-Velazquez, Supervisor of Transportation  
Jesus (Chu) Velazquez, Assistant Supervisor of Transportation

609-466-7601 x7010 or x7024  
[dvelazquez@mtsd.us](mailto:dvelazquez@mtsd.us)  
[jvelazquez@mtsd.us](mailto:jvelazquez@mtsd.us)

### Bus Safety and Behavior Expectations

Riding the bus is a privilege and students are expected to abide by school rules and act in a safe manner at all times. Failure to do so will result in a discipline referral to the main office, and, in serious cases, may result in loss of bus transportation. In such cases, parents shall provide for transportation to and from school during the period of such exclusion.

The following are expectations for students riding the bus:

- Be safe while waiting for and getting on and off the bus
  - Wait for bus to stop completely
  - Walk instead of run
  - Be patient as you and others get on and off
- Listen to the bus driver since s/he is in charge of the bus
- Stay safe on the bus by:
  - Staying in your assigned seat at all times
  - Buckling your seatbelt correctly and wearing it at all times
  - Sitting correctly in your seat
  - Not reaching out the window
- Treat others with respect while riding the bus
- Keep your bus clean and safe for everyone. Eating food on the bus is not allowed.
- If there is a problem on the bus it is important to let the bus driver know
- Remember that the bus driver is focused on the safety of everyone and should not be distracted while driving unless an emergency is being reported

## 9. Orchard Hill Drop-off and Parent Pick-up

### Early Childhood Center (Pre-K) Drop-off & Pickup

- All parents dropping off Pre-K students should do so in the parking lot adjacent to the ECC building. Please click [here](#) for a map depicting the location of the pickup/drop-off area.
  - Once parked, please walk your student along the sidewalk to the main entrance of the ECC.
  - Please avoid entering from the front parking lot, as this will be designated for buses and Kindergarten students.

### Main Campus Drop-off

- **Kindergarten** Drop-off is at the west gym by the circle parking lot on Burnt Hill Road from 9:25 am to 9:35 am when staff is present.
- **Grades 1 and 2** Drop-off is the East Gym by the main parking lot from 9:25 am to 9:35 am when staff is present. If you are the parent of multiple grade level students, please choose the drop off site that works best for your family. It is not expected that you drive to multiple sites to drop off your children.
- **Cars are not permitted in the bus lanes in front of the school between 8:35 and 9:35 am as this creates a traffic and safety hazard for students during arrival. Please do not pass a bus that is loading/unloading children at any time.**

### Main Campus Pick-up

- Parent Pick-up at the end of the day is on the **EAST SIDE ONLY** at 3:50 pm via our East Gym. Please park in the solar panel lot and enter the building through the double doors along the front of the school. For the safety of our students and staff, adults picking up may be asked to produce identification at any time. We recommend carrying a photo ID at all times.
- All students require a dated note with parent/guardian signature. If an adult who is not listed as an emergency contact in Genesis is to pick up the child(ren), then he/she must be named in the note and will be asked to

produce identification upon pick-up. **Please send a note to your child's teacher in the morning if you plan on picking up your child in the afternoon or if your child is attending an after school activity. Without a note, children will be sent to their buses.**

#### **Change in Student Dismissal**

- Changes in regular dismissal, after school activities, and parent pick up require a dated note from the parent or guardian to the classroom teacher at the beginning of the day.
- Midday and end of day dismissal changes and pickup requests can be disruptive to instruction and are difficult to honor as dismissal information is confirmed early in the day.
  - **If you need to make a change in your child's dismissal plan during the day, please call the main office at 609-466-7605 before 3:15 pm. Communicating changes to the main office instead of the classroom teacher helps to ensure an organized and safe dismissal. Additionally, please contact your after-school child care organization.**
  - **Any changes in dismissal plans received after 3:30pm cannot be honored.**

#### **Additional Important Information**

If signing out a child after 3:00 pm you must park in the main parking lot. Do not park in front of the school as buses arrive during this time to prepare for dismissal.

## **10. Village Elementary School Drop-off and Pick-up**

#### **Morning Drop Off**

If you need to drive your child to school, please use the driveway on the right side of the school to travel to the **rear** entrance. **This entrance will be open from 9:25 a.m. - 9:35 a.m. Please do not drop your child off early as the doors will be locked until 9:25 and there is no supervision.** Upon arriving at the rear of the school please follow the guidelines below.

1. Travel as far forward as possible along the sidewalk on your left.
2. Have your child ready to exit the car when you reach the sidewalk.
3. Stop your vehicle next to the school sidewalk.
4. Your child may exit on his or her own on the driver's side of the car, along any part of the sidewalk. Children are not permitted to exit from the passenger side without assistance from an adult.
5. Two doors will be open and supervised for your child's convenience and to assist with the flow of traffic.
6. Please remain in the line of cars in front of you and wait for traffic to move. Do not dart around any cars to avoid colliding with those exiting at the front of the line. **Should you need to pass another car to exit, please do so with extreme caution!**
7. DO NOT park in the Fire Lane for any reason.
8. Continue to follow the roadway back to Main Blvd.
9. Please do not drop students off in the front of Village School at any time, except for before school programs.

#### **Late Arrival to School**

Students are expected to be in school by 9:35 am on a normal school day. After 9:35 a.m. you must park in our visitors' parking lot in front of VES and walk your child in through the main entrance. Parking is not permitted in the front bus driveway. **An adult must sign children in at the main office.** Appropriate documentation must be provided for a late

arrival to be excused (see the excused/unexcused criteria in the attendance section). You must submit a written or Genesis request in advance if a late arrival is planned. (BOE Policy 5230)

### **Early Dismissal Pick Up/Midday Appointments**

If you need to pick up your child between the hours of 9:35 and 3:30 p.m. please park in our visitors' parking lot in front of VES. Parking is not permitted in the front bus driveway. **Please report to the main office where a secretary will call the classroom for your child to come to the main office and have you sign your child out.** Appropriate documentation must be provided for your child to be excused (see the excused/unexcused criteria in the attendance section). You must submit a written or Genesis request in advance if an early pick up is planned. (BOE Policy 5230) If you plan to bring your child back after a midday appointment, you must walk your child into the building and complete sign-in procedures.

***If someone other than the parent or guardian is to meet the student, a note is required indicating the person has parent/guardian permission to pick up that particular child. Photo identification must be provided to office staff prior to signing out and releasing students.***

### **End of Day Pick Up**

**Please note the main entrance will be inaccessible for student pick-up between 3:30 and 4:00 PM.** Please send a note to your child's teacher if you plan on picking up your child in the afternoons or if your child is attending an after school activity. Include in the note, the name of the person picking up your child. **Without a note, children will be sent to their buses.** The person picking up your child will be asked to produce identification (valid driver's license) when they come to pick your child up. All parents/designees should be prepared to produce identification at any given time, upon request, and they must sign children out before leaving the school building.

Use the driveway on the right side of the school to travel to the **rear** entrance of the school. Turn left into the first entrance of the large parking lot. Park in the designated spaces and enter through the cafeteria doors. **All adults must enter through the rear cafeteria doors and parents must sign children out in the cafeteria.** Students will be dismissed to the cafeteria waiting area with their parent pick up-notes at 3:50/3:55 p.m. as instruction takes place up until this time. Upon exiting the parking lot, please use the rear exit on the far side of the lot.

### **Change in Student Dismissal Plans**

Changes in regular dismissal, after school activities, and parent pick up require a dated note from the parent or guardian to the classroom teacher at the beginning of the day.

Midday and end of day dismissal changes and pickup requests can be disruptive to instruction as dismissal information is confirmed early in the day.

- **If you need to make a change in your child's dismissal plan during the day, please call the main office at 609-466-7606 before 3:00 pm. Communicating changes to the main office instead of the classroom teacher helps to ensure an organized and safe dismissal. Additionally, please contact your after school child care organization.**
- **Any changes in dismissal plans received after 3:00 pm cannot be honored.**

### **Additional Important Information**



If signing out a child after 3:00 pm you must park in the front visitor parking lot. Do not park in the fire lanes as buses arrive during this time to prepare for dismissal.

Your assistance in following these guidelines will help us and help you, keep all children and visitors safe. Thank you for your cooperation!

## 11. School Day Visits

### Procedures

Please enter through the main entrance and be prepared to:

- state your name and scheduled appointment destination
- report to the Welcome Center (OHES) or Visitor's Kiosk (VES) where you will use your identification to sign in and obtain a visitor name tag before entering the VES main office.
- sign out before leaving the premises.

Note: During special events, the rear entrance at VES may have extended hours, which will be communicated in advance.

## 12. Dress Code

We expect the students will come to school in a manner that promotes an atmosphere for learning. In the event your child arrives at school inappropriately dressed, we will contact you.

The following dress code pertains to all OHES and VES students (Board Policy # 5511):

1. Items of clothing that would impair the health and safety of the student, other students or the district are not allowed, nor are items of clothing that would distract the student or other students.
2. Sneakers are the ideal footwear for play during recess and for Physical Education. For safety reasons, the wearing of beach type flip-flops or bedroom slippers is prohibited, unless otherwise designated.
3. Shorts that are short, tank tops and other clothes that are less practical for play are discouraged.

## 13. Pupil Discipline/Code of Conduct

### Positive Behavior Supports

#### **Responsive Classroom**

The Responsive Classroom approach is a way of teaching that emphasizes social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community. Developed by classroom teachers, the approach consists of practical strategies for helping students build academic and social-emotional competencies day in and day out. How students learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand. The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction. To be successful academically and socially, students need a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. At both elementary schools, we place a strong emphasis on knowing the students we teach — individually, culturally, and developmentally — and partnering with their families for success. Some

common practices seen in Responsive Classrooms include morning meeting, interactive modeling, positive teacher language, logical consequences, guided discovery, and academic choice.

### **Building Community through Character Education**

Both OHES and VES value community and enforce the values of character education through our daily routines, classroom lessons, and schoolwide activities and initiatives. A focus on developing listening skills, encouraging kindness, discussing respect and inclusion, and promoting self esteem helps our students develop character and build a strong school community.

### **Digital Citizenship**

Digital citizenship refers to the responsible use of technology by anyone who uses computers, the Internet, and digital devices to engage with others on any level. Please remember that parents are their child's digital citizenship coach and are responsible for monitoring students' use of technology at home.

Please be aware that social media platforms like YouTube and TikTok are not designed for children under 13. Allowing your child to have their own account violates the platform's terms of service and exposes them to potential online risks. As their guardian, you are responsible for your child's online activities, including the content they post and the content they view.

At OHES and VES students utilize Common Sense Media to discuss Digital Citizenship tools. There are many parent resources available on this website, as well, to facilitate important discussions with your child at home. For more information visit [Common Sense Media](#).

### **Meet the Digital Citizens!**

#### ***Balance digital life like Arms***

Young kids probably use tech more than we realize: for entertainment, learning, and to connect with friends and family. Arms helps kids learn how to make healthy choices to find a balance between the things they do on- and offline.

#### ***Be cautious online like Guts***

Having access to tech comes with its own set of responsibilities. Guts helps young kids learn how to stay safe online and what it means to be a responsible digital citizen.

#### ***Think before you share like Feet***

What we do and share online leaves a trail and tells a story of who we are. Feet helps young kids learn about their digital footprints and how to know what things are safe to share online. Every thing that you do online is - **Public & Permanent**.

#### ***Be kind to others like Heart***

It's important that we practice the golden rule, whether we're in person or online. Heart helps young kids learn about community and how to practice kindness when we use tech.

#### ***Be an upstander like Legs***

Maintaining a positive community takes a lot of work, but it is always easier when we work as a team. Legs helps young kids learn how to support each other and navigate the conflicts that might come up when we go online.

### ***Follow your curiosity like Head***

The online world is full of information, and it is the perfect place for us to learn more about the things that interest us. Head helps young kids learn how they can explore their interests online and how to respect others' work.

### **Student Code of Conduct**

The ultimate purpose of discipline is to help students learn to be responsible, productive contributors to society. Teachers and administrators endeavor to be firm, yet fair, while maintaining the dignity of the student. Schools are responsible for all students whether they are in the classroom, hallway, bus, cafeteria, or on the playground.

Orchard Hill and Village Elementary School both use school values to guide their expectations for school behavior:

[OHES Cub Core Values](#)

[VES Blazer's Beliefs](#)

When students do not meet these expectations, school staff respond appropriately, following a code of conduct developed by building administration and followed by the school community. When a student breaks a rule, a school staff member will work to help the student see the connection between his/her actions and consequences, as well as between the act and the rule that was broken. Logical consequences are considered, along with the age level and developmental needs of the students, the history of the unacceptable behavior, and the circumstances of the offense. Please click below to access each school's code of conduct, which outlines examples of behavior, logical consequences, and progressive measures that may be utilized at the classroom and/or administrative level.

[OHES Code of Conduct Tiers](#)

[VES Code of Conduct Tiers](#)

### **Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying - [Policy 5512](#)**

"Harassment, intimidation or bullying means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds... that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:

- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property; or
- Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
- Creates a hostile educational environment at school for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student."

**All situations where there is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct are addressed by the school regardless of whether or not it appears that there is a potential violation of the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying policy.** Consequences are determined by the acts committed, the age level and developmental needs of the students, the

history of the unacceptable behavior, and the circumstances of the offense; **not** whether the incident is labeled as bullying.

Potential violations of the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying policy will be investigated by the school's anti-bullying specialist to determine if the situation is in violation of the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying policy.

Students who have witnessed or been victimized by harassment/bias statements/actions or bullying should report the incident immediately to a teacher, counselor, and/or an administrator.

If you would like to file a formal complaint regarding Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying, please contact your appropriate building principal:

**Orchard Hill Elementary School:**

Daniel Van Hise at [dvanhise@mtsd.us](mailto:dvanhise@mtsd.us)

**Village Elementary School:**

Susan E. Lacy at [slacy@mtsd.us](mailto:slacy@mtsd.us)

**Orchard Hill Anti-Bullying Specialists:**

Wendy Gelinas, [wgelinas@mtsd.us](mailto:wgelinas@mtsd.us)

Melissa Patane-Schulter, [mpatane@mtsd.us](mailto:mpatane@mtsd.us)

Amanda Huelbig, [ahuelbig@mtsd.us](mailto:ahuelbig@mtsd.us)

**Village Anti Bullying Specialists:**

Lauren Fornal, [lfornal@mtsd.us](mailto:lfornal@mtsd.us)

Jolene Schantz, [jschantz@mtsd.us](mailto:jschantz@mtsd.us)

**District Anti-Bullying Coordinator:**

Cory Delgado, [cdelgado@mtsd.us](mailto:cdelgado@mtsd.us)

1014 Route 601

Skillman, NJ 08558

(609)466-7601

Please use this link for policy and reporting details: [District Policy 5512 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying](#)

## 14.

## Lunch, Recess, and Snack

### Lunch and Recess Behavior Expectations

Students in grades K-4 will eat lunch in the school cafeteria and participate in recess on the playgrounds. During inclement weather, students will have indoor recess in their designated locations. Please remember to make sure your child has appropriate, supportive footwear for playing during recess. Though there are staff members present who can assist students in opening lunch containers, it is best if you pack a lunch in containers that your child is able to open independently.

Students are expected to abide by school rules and act in a safe manner at all times. The lunch and recess time is staffed by OHES or VES educational support assistants as well. PTA parent volunteers help all students present at a given lunch time.

The following are expectations for lunch and recess:

- Follow the expectations of the school and your classroom
- Listen to all adults in charge
- Stay safe at lunch and recess by:

- Staying in your seat in the cafeteria
- Walking in the cafeteria when getting up
- Waiting patiently and respectfully in lines for lunch, going outside, and waiting for your teacher
- Using the recess equipment appropriately
- Treat others with respect
- Keep the cafeteria clean and safe for everyone by clearing all trash and recycling
- Take care of cafeteria and school equipment
- If there is a problem, it is important to let an adult at lunch or recess know

The educational support assistants at lunch and recess make initial decisions if a student does not follow these expectations. The majority of these discipline issues are resolved at this level and are used as teaching opportunities for students. Educational support assistants and teachers may determine that a student needs to speak with an administrator in the main office if a student repeatedly has difficulty following these expectations or if a specific situation warrants this level of attention.

### Purchasing a School Lunch [Food Services Website](#)

Students may bring lunch from home or purchase a school lunch. Maschio's is the district's food provider. To find a menu and list of a la carte items offered in the cafeteria daily, please click on the link above and select the school (OHES or VES).

In order to purchase lunch, all students must have an account through PaySchools. To set up and learn how to manage your account, please click [HERE](#). Students will use their student ID numbers to purchase lunch/snacks in the cafeteria. **No cash** will be accepted for cafeteria purchases.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the food service program or your child's lunch account, please feel free to contact Mashcio's using the contact information listed on the district website.

#### Snack

You may choose to pack a healthy, **nut-free** snack and water for your child each day. Water will help us maintain a clean classroom environment. Snacks are eaten in classrooms and may be eaten in the morning for those with a late lunch and in the afternoon for those with an early lunch. Your classroom teacher will provide you with more specific information about snack in the classroom.

## 15.

## Personal Items

**Lost and Found** The Lost and Found is located in the cafeteria of each building. It is maintained by the PTA. It is helpful to label all of your child's belongings on the inside with his/her first and last name if possible. Items found with a student's name on it can easily be returned directly to the student in his/her classroom.

If your child loses an item, please check here for it. You can either check for it here yourself one day or send a note or email to your classroom teacher requesting that your child check the Lost and Found. It sometimes takes a day or two for a lost item to turn up at the Lost and Found. So it is helpful to check back once or twice. The PTA does clean out the Lost and Found a few times during the year and often announces this before doing so to give families the opportunity to check for lost items one last time.

### Games/Electronic Devices/Cell Phones/Smart Watches

Due to the risk of loss, damage, and disruption to the learning environment, the use of personal electronic devices (such as cell phones, smart watches, or any device capable of an internet connection) are strictly prohibited. Students are encouraged to engage in social interactions with their peers during lunch, recess, and on the bus ride to and from school. If games, electronics, smart watches and cell phones are brought to school, students will be required to keep them off and in their backpacks during school instructional hours. Any staff member may take a device if a student is using it without permission. Confiscated devices can only be retrieved by a parent or guardian from the school's main office.

## 16.

### Health Office

Orchard Hill Elementary School  
Ms. Rachelle Hanna, RN, CSN [rhanna@mtsd.us](mailto:rhanna@mtsd.us)  
Claire Fazio, RN [cfazio@mtsd.us](mailto:cfazio@mtsd.us)  
609-466-7605, Option 3 (phone)  
609-466-7193 (fax)

Village Elementary School  
Mrs. Patricia Cizin, RN, CSN [pcizin@mtsd.us](mailto:pcizin@mtsd.us)  
Mrs. Yuen Tang RN [ytang@mtsd.us](mailto:ytang@mtsd.us)  
609-466-7606, Option 3 (phone)  
609-466-7190 (fax)

### General Health Guidelines

Our school nurses are available to provide nursing services and emergency health care for students. At both elementary schools, we have two school nurses. In order to maintain a healthy environment for all students, we request that you comply with the following guidelines to prevent your child from contracting an illness from another child and vice versa.

- If your child wakes up with a fever or you suspect your child has a fever (temperature >100 degrees) please do not give them a fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol or Motrin and then send him/her to school. Your child may have an illness that is contagious and remains contagious even after giving him/her a fever reducing medication. A sick child will not be a productive learner and s/he will be spreading his/her germs.
- Before returning to school a child must be fever free for 24 hours without the aid of a fever reducing medication. (Temperature < 100 degrees).
- If your child's illness involves vomiting and or diarrhea the child needs to be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- The best practice against the spread of germs is hand washing and keeping your hands away from your face. Continue to remind your child to wash his/her hands frequently, especially after using the restroom, before eating, and after being in a public area. Also remind your child to keep his/her hands out of the mouth.
- If a student becomes sick during the school day and the nurse determines the student is too sick to return to class, the parent/guardian will be contacted to arrange for the student's transportation home.
- Head Lice: If you suspect your child has head lice, you must contact the school nurse immediately. It is suggested you contact your child's physician for the appropriate treatment. A child may return to school once treated with an approved shampoo.
- Flu: If your child has flu-like symptoms, we recommend that you consult with your child's healthcare provider regarding possible treatment and length of absence. Please be sure to send the documentation from this visit to the health office.

### Medication

The nurses at both schools handle all medication. Before any medication is administered by a school nurse, all of the following must take place:

- In order for medication to be held and dispensed in the health office, there must be an accompanying doctor's order via the appropriate form depending on your child's condition. The forms can be accessed [HERE](#)

- A note from parent/guardian giving permission for medication to be administered by the nurse and providing the correct dosage and time medication needs to be given
- All prescription medication must be in a labeled prescription container and over-the-counter medication must be in its original container.
- Parent/guardian **must** transport medication to/from school, unless the doctor has documented on the medication orders that the student is allowed to hold their medication.
- Medications not picked up by the last day of school will be discarded.

### **Guidelines for the Management of Life-Threatening Health Conditions in Schools (Food Allergies, Diabetes, Dietary Restrictions)**

Food allergies can be life threatening and many Orchard Hill/Village School students suffer from severe and potentially life-threatening food allergies. The risk of accidental exposure to foods can be reduced in the school setting when the school works with students, parents/guardians, medical personnel, and staff to provide a safe educational environment for food-allergic students.

During official school hours, the following precautions will be enforced.

1. All classrooms are nut-free (\*nuts include peanuts, tree nuts and nut by-products).
2. Ingredient labels on all snacks to be consumed in the classroom must be nut-free. Product labels should be read by parents to confirm that the snack is free from peanuts, tree nuts and nut by-products.
3. Any snacks containing nuts will be returned to the student's lunchbox and stored in their backpack to be consumed in the lunchroom or sent home.
4. Nut products may be kept in a student's backpack/lunchbox for later consumption in the lunchroom ONLY. Separate seating is available in the lunchroom for students with life-threatening allergies.
5. No outside food is permitted to be shared in the classroom. All food that is brought to school must be consumed ONLY by the student who brought it in.
6. Food will not be used for classroom activities unless the activity is part of the written Board of Education approved curriculum.
7. In-class birthday celebrations: No food will be permitted in the classroom as part of the celebration. Please consult with your child's teacher for alternative ideas and activities (see Non-Food Celebration Ideas).
8. Parents will be notified of the occasions when lunch will be held in the classroom to plan their child's lunch and snack accordingly.
9. Cafeteria rules apply to field trips.
10. Students with life-threatening food allergies may sit at an allergy table if the parent prefers. All students with life-threatening food allergies must have the life-threatening allergy questionnaire filled out by the parent documenting preference for lunch seating (allergy table or any table) and lunch purchases (may or may not purchase lunch from Maschio's).

### **Non-Food Celebration Ideas**

Birthdays are important to children and they like to celebrate with their classmates. However, sending in a food treat to the classroom to celebrate excludes children with food allergies, diabetes or other dietary restrictions.

Students can:

- Choose a book for his/her parent to read and then possibly donate to the class;
- Bring in a special story or item to share with the class;
- Bring in non-food goodie bags (pencils, stickers, erasers);
- Bring in a craft for the class to make;

- Send in a decorated box with index cards/small pieces of paper for classmates to write something nice about the birthday child and put into the box (sent home with the birthday child);
- Send in an autograph book for classmates to write a message to the birthday child/draw a picture;
- Bring in something that his/her classmates can sign as a treat for the birthday child (shirt/sweatshirt, tote bag, autograph stuffed animal, pillowcase, etc.); or
- Ask classmates to color a picture and/or write what they like best about the birthday child (these can be bound together with a ribbon to make a keepsake book).

Always check with your child's teacher first to inquire what is acceptable for the classroom and be sure to provide advance notice to make sure that birthday plans will fit into their schedule.

**NOTE: Birthday or other party invitations may not be distributed in school unless all children in the class have been invited.**

### Sleep

Activities, dinner, and bedtime routines most likely occupy your afternoon and evenings when school lets out for the day. However, it is what is happening at night, during your child's sleeping hours, which can greatly impact how s/he is able to perform or function during his/her daily tasks. Sleep is especially important for children as it directly impacts mental and physical development.

- Children aged five to twelve need 10-11 hours of sleep.
- Watching TV and other digital media close to bedtime has been associated with bedtime resistance, difficulty falling asleep, anxiety around sleep, and sleeping fewer hours.
- Sleep deprivation impacts health, academic performance, and behavior.
- Increased total sleep, earlier bedtimes, and later weekday rise times are associated with better grades in school.
- Sleep deprivation may present itself in many ways other than daytime sleepiness -- inattention, poor concentration, moodiness, behavioral problems, and poor academic performance and social skills.

**A note regarding physical activity:** Students who are well enough to come to school are assumed well enough to participate in all physical activity including PE and recess, unless otherwise documented in the student's 504 plan or IEP. If your child will need to refrain from PE and/or recess due to illness or injury, a doctor's note must be submitted directly to the health office. The note should state the nature of the illness or injury, the duration of the accommodations, and the estimated follow up.

## 17.

## School Counseling

Orchard Hill Elementary School

Mrs. Wendy Gelinas      [wgelinas@mtsd.us](mailto:wgelinas@mtsd.us)      x1015

Mrs. Melissa Patane-Schulter      [mpatane@mtsd.us](mailto:mpatane@mtsd.us)      x1110

Mrs. Amanda Huelbig      [ahuelbig@mtsd.us](mailto:ahuelbig@mtsd.us)      x1078

Village Elementary School

Mrs. Lauren Fornal      [lfornal@mtsd.us](mailto:lfornal@mtsd.us)      x 2246

Mrs. Jolene Schantz      [jschantz@mtsd.us](mailto:jschantz@mtsd.us)      x 2501

The school counselors serve in many different roles but their primary role is that of a support for students. Through class, small group, and individual interactions with students, the school counselors facilitate personal, social, and intellectual growth. The school counselors help students develop decision-making skills, adjust to new experiences, and understand their personal abilities and limitations to support the enhancement of students' educational experiences.



The school counselors also serve as a support to teachers to provide insights on special needs of students.

Additionally, they serve as resources to parents and families to ensure every student experiences both academic as well as social and emotional growth. Parents should feel free to contact our school counselors when they feel their child needs a safe place to go to express his/her thoughts, feelings, and concerns.

The school counselors are assigned to specific grade levels and follow students to each new grade level while the students are at their elementary school.

## **18.**

### **Academic Program**

#### **Language Arts**

The literacy program supports students as they learn to read and write with increasing skill and fluency. Students enjoy showcasing their literary knowledge through discussions with peers and teachers during whole-class direct instruction, individual conferences, and small group instruction. The standards-based curriculum focuses on reading and analyzing literature and informational text, writing, foundational skills, and speaking and listening. Daily instruction is organized in a workshop structure where students engage in authentic reading and writing while the teachers take on the role of mentors and coaches. Additionally, teachers engage students in interactive read alouds, shared reading, guided reading, and interactive writing, during which students are exposed to both complex text and books that they are able to read independently. Students participate in daily word work activities, during which they learn phonics skills, participate in phonological awareness activities, practice spelling patterns and study grammar conventions. Teachers prioritize representation of diverse groups and themes of equity and inclusion in text selection for both read alouds and independent reading.

#### **Mathematics**

The mathematics program focuses on building connections between number concepts, geometric relationships and a range of problem solving skills. Beyond the ability to calculate, students learn to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to measurement and data analysis tasks. Students learn to make sense of mathematics and communicate understandings to others. Daily instruction is organized using a variety of structures to maximize differentiation to meet the learning needs of all students.

#### **Science**

Students are provided with a variety of opportunities to think and work as scientists throughout the year with a focus on fostering curiosity and wonder, inquiry and discovery, and a passion for learning and understanding. Students engage with hands-on explorations and activities with authentic built-in problem-solving and inquiry across the life, physical, and earth sciences. They have additional opportunities to apply their mathematical, reading, and writing skills within these content areas.

#### **Social Studies**

Our social studies program introduces the world to our students as they build a foundation for a global future. Self-awareness, awareness of the world and its people, a sense of time and place, and the skills required to form positive relationships with those around them are what comprises the primary social studies program. Our goal is for students to develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

### **Related Arts**

Orchard Hill and Village Elementary Schools seek to provide students with a wide variety of educational opportunities. In Kindergarten, students receive physical education, art, music, library, and world language. In grades 1-4, students receive health and physical education, art, music, technology, library, and Spanish. Students attend these classes using the six day cycle schedule. OHES pre-school students receive related arts instruction in physical education, library, art, and music.

### **Homework**

Based on the research and work of the District Leadership Team, a PK-12 committee comprised of teachers and administrators, the following are our homework guidelines for Orchard Hill and Village Elementary Schools.

#### **OHES**

We believe that the primary focus of school should be cultivating a love of learning. In very young learners, research has shown that formal homework does not have a substantial academic benefit. At Orchard Hill, we believe that time should be used to read nightly, with adult involvement. In addition, we believe that children should have developmentally appropriate experiences that promote social and emotional growth. Some examples are: active play, participation in after school activities, crafts and family time. Due to these beliefs, Orchard Hill does not assign formal homework.

#### **VES**

At Village Elementary School, the primary focus of our school day is on academic growth and the social/emotional well-being of all students. In order to become well-rounded individuals, we believe students should experience developmentally appropriate activities. These activities include family time, active play, and downtime, as well as academic practice. We recognize that as students mature, their capabilities and needs change and develop and that expectations toward independence should increase as well.

#### **What VES Families Can Expect:**

**3rd Grade:** Generally, 20 minutes of reading and 10 minutes of math fact practice

**4th Grade:** Generally, 20 minutes of reading which may include a response and 20 minutes of math skill/concept practice

### **English Language Learning (ELL)**

English Language Learning is available to K-12 students who are learning to speak and understand English. Multilingual Learners develop academic language abilities that allow them to successfully participate in instruction in the general classroom. Students may spend less than one full year or up to 3-4 years in ELL, depending on need.

### **Academic Support Services**

Language arts and mathematics support provide modifications and support for students who need assistance in math and/or language arts. Students are identified through various standards aligned assessments. Support teachers may provide instruction inside or outside of the classroom, depending on what will best serve a student's needs. These services are designed to be flexible in that students will receive support and strategies that enable them to follow the instruction of their classroom teacher without additional teacher support. The clear purpose of this support is to exit students at grade level proficiency in those content areas. Students' learning achievement is reviewed regularly, and students may enter or exit the program at any time during the school year, based on need.

### **Differentiation Model**

Our elementary differentiation model provides all students with academic challenges within the regular classroom setting in mathematics and language arts. The students are clustered together in small groups with students of similar ability.

Teachers differentiate mathematics instruction for flexible grouping throughout the year based on various formal and informal situations to meet students' needs. In language arts, the students are grouped flexibly and based on reading/writing levels.

This differentiation model provides our students with opportunities to meet two of their greatest needs; the opportunity to work together with students of similar abilities and/or interests, and at other times, to work in heterogeneous groups with their peers.

### **Intervention and Referral Services**

Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) are designed to assist students who are experiencing learning, behavior, or health difficulties and to assist staff in addressing these needs. The I&RS team meets regularly throughout the year to partner with teachers and families to address these concerns within the general education program with an emphasis on early identification and intervention. If a student's classroom teacher plans to meet with the I&RS team, s/he communicates this with a student's parents. Parents always receive notes from these meetings and are invited to attend when appropriate.

### **Special Services**

Our elementary schools provide comprehensive special education support for students beginning in preschool. Our preschool model includes full day services for students diagnosed with autism, half-day services for students with cognitive or language delays, and inclusive preschool for students who need less support in general education settings.

In Kindergarten through fifth grade we provide a continuum of services that includes modifications in the general education setting, in-class resource (team teaching provided by general education and special education staff), resource room instruction for students who require small group multi-sensory learning experiences, and language learning disabled and/or multiply disabled classes for students who require greater support. We also have services for students diagnosed with autism, which may take place in particular classes based upon applied behavior analysis, or which may take place in any of the above models.

Our child study teams consist of a school social worker, school psychologist, learning disabilities-teacher consultant, and behaviorist. Speech therapists and occupational therapists provide support to those students who may need services in those areas. Special Services also provides extensive professional development for staff and parent training opportunities to solicit the support of all people that impact the lives of students.

## **19. Parent Communication**

The best educational results happen when parents and teachers work together to plan for and discuss a student's educational needs. We encourage frequent communication between parents and teachers.

### **Email and Voicemail**

All Montgomery Township School District teaching staff members have an email account and may be contacted this way. In most, though not all, cases the staff member's email address is the first letter of the staff member's first name and the complete last name followed by @mtsd.us. All teaching staff members also have voicemail and may be reached via voicemail as well.

### **Back to School Night**

Every year, we hold Back to School Nights for each grade level. Please visit the OHES or VES websites for dates and times for PreK-4th grade nights.

### **Report Cards and Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Report cards and Parent-Teacher Conferences are used to communicate student progress with families on a quarterly basis. Report cards are distributed electronically via Parent Resources at mid-year and end of the year. Parent-Teacher Conferences are held in the fall and spring. Below are the specific dates for these events:

#### **Orchard Hill and Village Elementary Schools:**

Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences	November 3rd, 4th, & 5th (Early Dismissal schedule for students)
Mid-year Report Cards	February 6th
Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences	March 17th, 18th, & 19th (Early Dismissal schedule for students)
End of Year Report Cards	June 23rd

### **Parent Resources**

Parent Resources is a communication tool used throughout the Montgomery Township School District to allow students' guardians to:

- View basic student information, schedules, homeroom teacher, bus route, etc.
- View attendance information
- Update your contact information
- [Sign up for parent-teacher conferences](#)
- View report cards
- View other communications and letters from the school

To log into Parent Resources, you will need an account. Many parents already have one, but if you do not or if you experience a problem with your account, please send the following information to [genesissupport@mtsd.us](mailto:genesissupport@mtsd.us).

- Parent Name
- Phone number (daytime)
- Parent email address
- Student Last Name
- Student First Name
- Grade

Once your account is created, you will receive an email with your login information. It is important to make sure your contact information remains current to ensure you receive school/district updates and are able to be contacted in the event of an emergency.

If you have older children in the district and already have a Parent Resources account set-up, you can simply email [genesissupport@mtsd.us](mailto:genesissupport@mtsd.us) with your username and the names and grades of your children that you would like to add to the account.

## 20.

## MES PTA and MSEPTA

The Montgomery Elementary Schools Parent-Teacher Association (MES PTA) is one PTA that serves both Orchard Hill and Village Elementary Schools. The PTA strives to work as a positive team that supports teachers, parents and, most of all, our students. Without your help we just cannot meet our goals. Your support of fundraisers, your commitment of time, and your donation of talents all come together to make a great year for all students. It is our goal to have every OHES and VES family join the PTA and participate in our fabulous activities.

Information about the MES PTA, how to join, and student activities is sent home at the beginning of the school year and can also be found at <http://www.mtsd.k12.nj.us/domain/441>. The MES PTA also has a weekly email that you can sign up for as well.

The Montgomery Special Education PTA (MSEPTA) is a district-wide organization designed to build strong partnerships amongst teachers, parents, administration, existing PTA's, and the community so that children receiving special education services of any kind will be better understood, integrated and embraced by our school and community.

Information about MSEPTA and how to get involved can be found at <https://www.mtsd.k12.nj.us/Page/17154>, You can also sign up for regular MSEPTA communications to stay informed.

## 21.

## Student Safety

### Fire Drills and Emergency Drills

The Montgomery Township School District has developed plans to deal with a variety of emergency situations. Fire drills will be conducted at least one (1) time per month. Lockdown and/or evacuation drills will be conducted at least one (1) time per month during the school year. No one is permitted to enter the school during a drill. If you arrive at OHES or VES during a drill, please wait outside until the drill is complete. Students, teachers, staff, and visitors are expected to take these drills seriously.

### Threats of Violence or Violent Acts

In accordance with Board policy, threats are defined as attempting by physical menace or intimidation to put another in fear of imminent serious bodily injury, or threatening to commit any crime of violence with the purpose of terrorizing another. Examples of such threats would be (but are not limited to) threatening to "blow up a building" or to "kill" an individual.

All reported threats of violence will be investigated. All threats will be taken seriously and the proper authorities will be notified. Students found to be making threats may be subject to suspension/expulsion, evaluation by a psychiatrist, and police intervention.

### Weapons

Board policy 8467 prohibits the possession, use, or exchange of any weapon in any school building, on school grounds, at any school sponsored event, and on school sanctioned transportation except as the possession and use of a weapon is authorized by law and required in the performance of the possessor's duty. Any student who possesses, uses, or exchanges a weapon in violation of this policy shall be subject to stringent discipline, which may include expulsion.

### **Backpacks**

While rolling backpacks are popular and convenient items for today's students, please note that these particular backpacks can pose a tripping hazard in our busy hallways and do not fit into students' individual classroom cubbies or hallway lockers designed to hold his/her personal belongings during the school day.

## **22.**

### **Affirmative Action**

Orchard Hill Elementary School Affirmative Action Officer

Mrs. Lisa Caudill  
lcaudill@mtsd.us  
(609)466-7605

Village Elementary School Affirmative Action Officer

Mrs. Jessica Glover  
jglover@mtsd.us  
(609)466-7606

Montgomery Township School District Affirmative Action Officer

Kelly Mattis  
1014 Route 601  
Skillman, NJ 08558  
kmattis@mtsd.us(609) 466-7600 Ext. 7233

As per Board policy 2260, the Montgomery Township School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, mental or physical handicap, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, age or sex in any of its policies or regulations related to admissions, employment, financial aid, educational service, programs, or activities.

## **23.**

### **Board of Education Policies**

The Montgomery Township School District policies can be located on our district website at [www.mtsd.k12.nj.us](http://www.mtsd.k12.nj.us) Below are some specific policies:

P2260 Affirmative Action Program for School and Classroom Practices  
P2361 Acceptable Use of Computer Networks/Computers and Resources  
P2460 Special Education/Sending Districts  
P5200 Attendance  
P5330 Administration of Medication  
P5331 Management of Life-Threatening Allergies in Schools  
P5338 Diabetes Management  
P5511 Dress and Grooming

P5512 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying  
P5516 Use of Electronic Communication Devices  
P5519 Dating Violence at School  
P5530 Substance Abuse  
P5600 Pupil Discipline/Code of Conduct  
P5615 Suspected Gang Activity  
P5751 Sexual Harassment  
P7441 Electronic Surveillance in School Buildings  
P8601 Pupil Supervision After School Dismissal  
P9713 Recruitment by Special Interest Groups

Policies can be located by selecting the “Board of Education” tab and select “Board of Education” policies on the drop down menu. Policies are listed numerically on the left side of the page. For those who do not have access to a computer, copies of the policies are available in the main office. Always check the MTSD website for the latest policy updates.