Sandy Hook School

HANDBOOK
2026-2027



12 Dickinson Drive
Sandy Hook, Connecticut 06482
(203) 426-7657
(203) 270-3682 fax
Principal: Dr. Kathleen Gombos
Assistant Principal: Mrs. Laura Esposito

Newtown Public Schools
Mission Statement

The mission of Newtown Public Schools, a partnership of students, families, educators, and community, is to ***inspire each student to excel*** in attaining and applying the knowledge, skills and attributes that lead to personal success while becoming a contributing member of a dynamic global community. We accomplish this by creating an unparalleled learning environment characterized by high expectations, quality instruction, continuous improvement, and civic responsibility.



At Our Core

Newtown Public School District

CORE VALUES



Newtown Public School District

Newtown Board of Education's Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Diversity, equity and inclusion are words that, when used together, describe policies and programs that promote the representations, participation and contributions of different groups of individuals as set forth in Policy 0523 Equity and Diversity including but not limited to people of different race, culture, religion, mental and physical ability, sexual orientation, or gender expression or identity.

More specifically:

- Schools should be welcoming and supportive spaces for our students.
- Our curriculum should be infused with materials that include diverse authors, protagonists, heroes and historical figures.
- When studying topics in our classroom, our students will learn through multiple lenses and points of view.
- Schools should embrace kindness and diversity. Any form of harassment or bullying based on personal characteristics, as enumerated above, will not be tolerated.
- As educators, we need to provide various perspectives on topics and remain apolitical. To encourage critical thinking, we need to develop learning environments that allow students to identify and understand perspectives provided in the material and related discussions, and to draw their own informed conclusions. That is where true learning occurs.

CASEL: Social Emotional Learning

Newtown Public Schools are committed to the development of social and emotional skills. We believe social emotional learning competencies are essential for students to be successful in our schools and become contributing citizens in our local and global communities.



Central to our belief is that students can continually progress in their abilities to manage emotions, make responsible decisions, work cooperatively, resolve conflicts, and overcome challenges. This progress is dependent on effective teaching of SEL skills, opportunities to practice SEL skills in school, and a school culture where everyone is engaged in SEL using a common language and research-based practices.

The CASEL Competencies

Self-Awareness

Recognizing one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and limitations.

Self-Management

Managing emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goals.

Relationship Skills

Forming positive relationships, and working in teams, dealing effectively with conflict.

Social Awareness

Showing understanding empathy for others.

Responsible Decision-Making

Making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior.

K-4 Schedule School Hours

Regular School Day	9:05 a.m - 3:37 p.m.
2 Hour Delayed Opening	11:05 a.m. - 3:37 p.m.
3 Hour Delayed Opening	12:05 p.m. - 3:37 p.m.
2 Hour Early Dismissal	9:05 a.m. - 1:37 p.m.
3 Hour Early Dismissal	9:05 a.m. - 12:37 p.m.

Communication

Directory

Main Line	(203) 426-7657
Attendance Line	(203) 426-7658
Attendance Email	shsattendance@newtown.k12.ct.us
Fax	(203) 270-3682
Newtown Public Schools	(203) 426-7600
All-Star Transportation	(203) 304-9779
Food Services	(203) 426-7637
EdAdvance	(860) 567-0863

email

All Sandy Hook School staff have Newtown email accounts. The format is last name, first initial followed by: **@newtown.k12.ct.us**. Staff check emails daily and will respond within 24 hours, as long as it is not a weekend, holiday or vacation.

Email is efficient and wonderful for general information and quick answers. Confidentiality and fully responding to a concern is always a priority, therefore email may not always be the most appropriate method of communication. Multiple emails eliciting more questions is a good sign that a phone call or conference is best.

Please note that email is not monitored when school is not in session.



Parent-Teacher Conferences

Every parent will have the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher during fall Parent-Teacher Conferences. ***This year the dates are November 5-7, 2025 (12:37 Dismissal)***. This is an opportunity to discuss the transition to and the expectations of the new grade-level as well as student strengths, weaknesses, and goals for the year.

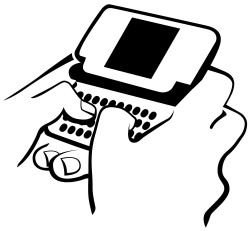
In March, we set aside some time for Teacher Requested Parent-Teacher Conferences. This follows our midyear assessments and gives us an opportunity to have a touch-base conversation with parents about student progress in the event there is a concern. ***These will occur on March 12-13, 2026 (12:37 Dismissal)***.

If you would like to discuss your child's progress or have questions, other than the normally scheduled conference times, we will be happy to meet with you. Feel free to contact the classroom teacher at any time throughout the school year to set a mutually convenient time.

Progress Reports

Every student will receive a Standards-Based Progress Report 3 times per year (December, March, and June). They are accessible online through the Parent Portal. We no longer print progress reports except for special circumstances approved by the principal. **There are times during the year that the ParentPortal is inaccessible (ex. summer), so it is recommended to print a copy for your records.**

Texting / Cell Phones



The Sandy Hook staff is asked not to give out their personal cell phone numbers for phone calls or texting. Please call the school or use email to reach out.

Website

Most information can be found on the Sandy Hook School website, including dates to remember and schedules, important phone numbers, lunch and bus information, teacher websites, the school directory, fun pictures/X, access to the ParentPortal, and PTA information and links.

The SHS website can be located at the following link:

https://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/SHSElem

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Newtown Public Schools has a strong commitment to continuously strengthening curriculum and instruction. Students in our district receive a rich and diverse academic program. We promote a balanced education that meets students' intellectual, social, and personal needs to help them continue their pursuit of lifelong learning. We strive to prepare our students to be thoughtful, active citizens who can function productively in a multicultural, rapidly changing, interdependent world.

More detailed information about the curriculum can be found on the district's website.

MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support)

MTSS is the process Newtown Schools use to provide support to students. Interventions are implemented and monitored by a MTSS Team. This team is an in-depth child study team that meets on a regularly scheduled basis. Members of the team may consist of the following staff: classroom teacher, principal, lead teacher, psychologist, reading consultant, math/science specialist, school nurse, school counselor, and special education teacher (as needed).

When a child is experiencing academic, emotional, or behavioral challenges, the team will develop a plan to gather additional information, provide recommendations to the classroom teacher, and suggest suitable accommodations, if needed. The classroom teacher will maintain communication with the parents regarding the difficulties the child is experiencing and the recommendations of the MTSS Team. The child's progress is closely monitored, and plans are adjusted as needed. If expected progress is not made, then further review with additional staff members may be warranted.

Special Education

The Pupil Services Staff, consisting of the special education teachers, school psychologist, and the speech and language pathologist, work closely with the principal, lead teacher, classroom teacher, and parents to provide assistance to children who may experience difficulty in the areas of learning, speech and language development, behavior, and social/emotional growth. Children are placed in this program after a formal referral procedure that includes educational evaluations and a PPT (Planning and Placement Team) meeting of which parents are a part. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is designed to meet the needs of students who require specialized education services, supports and instruction.

The special education teachers work closely with the classroom teachers and other specialists to develop and implement a program that ensures success for all children in the regular classroom setting.

Counseling Support

The school counselor and psychologist counsel students individually and/or in small groups. Groups/topics can include but are not limited to being new to the school, divorce, anxiety, and social skills. Some of the counseling is formal and part of a program (IEP), while other counseling can be more informal.

The school counselor and psychologist also work together with teachers and other specialists as a team in developing programs for students who are exhibiting problems that may interfere with their academic progress. They assist in teaching Second Step, our social-emotional curriculum, and with working out peer conflict issues. They also will assist families that may be in need of outside services beyond the scope of the school.

If you have concerns about your child's functioning, please bring these concerns to our attention. Any help or information you can give us in identifying problems that interfere with the learning process is very much appreciated.

Special Areas

We believe in teaching the whole child. In addition to academics, your child will participate in a specials class during our 6-Day Cycle.

All students in grades K-4 will have an **ART** class one time per 6-Day Cycle. Students experiment in many media and an art smock may be required. Artwork is collected throughout the year and put on display in the spring during our Art Show.





All students in grades K-4 will have a **LIBRARY** class one time per 6-Day Cycle. Literature, research, and technology are key components of lessons. We teach the students to locate books of need or interest, properly take care of all books and return them on time. They also learn to use technology responsibly.



All students in grades K-4 will have a **MUSIC** class one time per 6-Day Cycle. Lessons include reading and writing music, identifying and playing a variety of instruments, and developing a love for music. Grade 4 also participates in Chorus.



All students in grades K-4 will have a **PHYSICAL EDUCATION** class two times per 6-Day Cycle. The focus of many of the activities is on health and cooperative play. Students must wear sneakers in the gym. If at all possible, it is helpful if the child can keep a pair of sneakers in school.



All students in grades 2, 3 &4 will have a **SPANISH** class one time per 6-Day

Cycle. Lessons include learning vocabulary, speaking and writing the language.

Field Trips



Field trips are an integral part of the school program. When a field trip is planned, you will be notified of the place, date, time and other pertinent information, and you will be asked to sign a permission slip for each field trip activity.

A brief medical update is included on our Field Trip form that is sent home for your signature prior to a field trip. Please use it to inform the school of any changes and/or additions which are important for the school to know about your child's health prior to a field trip. ***Children will not be permitted to go on a field trip unless the form is completed.***

We keep the cost of trips to a minimum, however, *if the cost of a field trip presents a problem for you, please feel free to contact your child's teacher or the principal for assistance.*

It is the school's policy that students in grades K-4 do not bring spending money.

Parents wishing to chaperone must have a Volunteer Form completed and on file with the District. The link to complete the Volunteer Waiver form is available on the Newtown Public Schools website, https://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/volunteer**.**

District Professional Learning Days

The Newtown School District is dedicated to continually growing as professionals. We want our students to be lifelong learners, as are we. Therefore it is imperative to gather together periodically as a grade-level, team, school or across District. To do so, we build time into the school calendar for professional development days for our staff to collaborate. These are either No School for Students, Delayed Opening or Early Release Days. The District Calendar lists these days. They are also sent home at the beginning of the school year, and can be found on our website.

HEALTH

The Health Office is supervised by a registered nurse and equipped to provide emergency care for injuries and sickness that occur at school. If further care or treatment is required the parent is called, and the child is sent home or to a doctor. Injuries incurred at home should be seen by a physician.



Please notify the teacher and nurse of any allergies to foods or environment (bee stings, sugar, milk, nuts, etc.).

If your child has a communicable disease, please notify the school immediately. If your child has been exposed to a communicable or contagious disease, the school will notify you.

Entrance Requirements

State regulations require **written evidence** of immunization, signed by your doctor, provided to the school **prior** to enrollment of a student for the following,

1. **DPT**: (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus) 4 doses, the last dose received after 4th birthday- including all kindergarten students.
2. **Poliomyelitis**: 3 doses; the last after the 4th birthday-including all kindergarten students.
3. **Measles, Mumps, Rubella**

Measles: Physician's verification of immunization after (12) months of age and a second vaccination before entering 7th grade. **Effective August 2000**, all students must show proof of a second vaccination before entry.

Mumps Vaccine: Physician's verification of immunization after twelve (12) months of age.

Rubella/German Measles Vaccination: Physician's verification of immunization after (12) twelve months of age.

4. **HIB** (Hemophilus Influenzae Type B)
Physician's verification of immunization on entry into kindergarten – exempt if passed his/her 5th birthday.

5. **TB Test** This applies only to foreign & foreign born students (new entrants and Kindergarten students) entering from a high risk country or students traveling to a high risk country while attending school.
(1): Physician's verification of a tuberculin test (Mantoux) given in the USA, including the date given and the results of the test.

6. **Hepatitis B (HBV)**

1. Physician's verification of immunization for students born after 1/1/94: 3 doses as follows – 2 doses given at least 4 weeks apart followed by a third dose at least 4 months after the second.
2. Students entering the 7th grade must show proof of one dose with the completion of the series before entering 8th grade.

7. **Varicella**

1. All students born January 1, 1997 or later must show proof of immunity to varicella (chickenpox) disease for entry into licensed preschool programs and kindergarten.
2. All students entering 7th grade must show proof of immunity to varicella.

Proof of Immunity includes any of the following:

1. Documentation of age appropriate immunization (one dose given on or after the students' first birthday if they are under 13 years of age, 2 doses given at least 30 days apart for students whose initial vaccination is at 13 years of age or older).

2. Serologic evidence of past infection, or

3. A statement signed and dated by a physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse indicating that the child has already had chickenpox based on family and/or medical history.

Physical examinations are also required for new entrants and students in grades 6 and 10. These physicals must include specific health information such as height, weight, blood pressure, pulse, updating of immunizations, screenings, etc. and must be performed by a legal practitioner of medicine. Forms may be obtained from your child's school or nurse's office. For additional information please contact your school nurse.

All requests for exemptions from immunizations based on religious grounds must be by written notification by the parent. Allergic reaction exemptions must be by an order from a physician (MD) licensed to practice medicine in the United States.

General Health Suggestions



Children who are ill or show signs of becoming ill should not be sent to school. Your child cannot perform his or her best when they are ill, and we do not want to spread those germs to others. If a child becomes ill at school, parents will be notified and should provide immediate transportation. Parents should ensure that the nurse's office has current emergency data for accident or illness in case there is no one available to pick up the child.

Please notify the nurse of subsequent changes as well as making the changes through the ParentPortal in PowerSchool.

When your child will miss school, please call the attendance line at 426-7658 or email shsattendance@newtown.k12.ct.us.

Here are some helpful guidelines:

1. Sick children having a temperature of 100° or above, vomiting, or having an earache, etc. will be sent home at the discretion of the school nurse and/or personnel.
2. First aid will be given if your child is injured at school. If an ambulance or further medical attention is necessary, we will attempt to notify you immediately.
3. Please send your emergency telephone number into the office at the beginning of the school year on the form we send home.
4. Children with rashes may be excluded pending diagnosis.
5. A child should have a normal temperature, without medication, for 24 hours before returning to school.
6. Please send a note of explanation of illness to school after each multi-day absence.
7. Parents should notify the school nurse if their child has a contagious disease.

8. Parents are responsible to report special health problems and allergic tendencies to the school nurse. If medication is required, please inform the nurse of the doctor's orders.
9. School personnel are not responsible for the treatment of injuries received at home.
10. If a student is too sick to attend school, that decision applies to after school/evening activities. Students absent from school do not participate in evening activities.

Accidents

If your child is injured at school, first aid is given. If medical attention is needed, you will be notified immediately and asked to come to school. Applications for student accident insurance are sent home in August. Sandy Hook School does not carry insurance on students.

Administration of Medication



Nurses/trained school personnel may only administer medication during school hours with the written permission of a parent and the written order of a physician. Medication forms can be obtained from the school office or nurse's office. Medication should NOT be transported by the student on the school bus. ***Medication to be given should be brought to the school in the original prescription bottle by the parent and must be identified with the following:***

- the prescription number - the medication name - the student's name
- the dosage - the doctor's name - the directions for administration

ALLERGIES

If your child has any allergies to food or environment, please make sure the classroom teacher and school nurse have been made aware. In extreme situations we will work with your doctor to create a medical plan for your child.

The school must ensure the safety of all its students and therefore, at times, we must ask for parent and student cooperation. Due to an increase in the number and severity of allergies in the school, parents may receive a letter at the beginning of the year informing them of food items which cannot be sent into the classroom for snacks. However, any food can be sent in with a student for lunch. Your cooperation for the safety of the children is appreciated.

Health Screenings

All students, grades K, 1, 3, 4 and 5 will be screened annually for **VISUAL ACUITY and HEARING**. Volunteers from the Newtown Lions Club assist with "SPOT" vision screening, a fast and accurate method to screen vision in school-aged children. If a student fails the screening, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian referring the

student for a full vision exam by a physician.

Exclusion for Contagious Diseases

During the course of the school year, children contract many of the familiar children's diseases. The following list includes some of the most common diseases requiring exclusion:

Chicken Pox:	Exclude 7 days after the first eruption.
Rubella:	Exclude for at least 4 days after respiratory symptoms appear, isolate from women in their first three months of pregnancy.
Measles:	Exclude for at least 5-10 days after the rash has appeared.
Mumps:	Exclude for as long as swelling persists.
Ringworm:	Exclude until appropriate treatment has been started.
Impetigo:	Exclude until appropriate treatment has been started or recovery.
Conjunctivitis:	Exclude until under treatment or (pink eye) recovered.
Scabies:	Exclude until under treatment or recovered.
Respiratory Infections:	Exclude from school if fever is present and/or productive secretions are evident (cough or nasal discharge).

In the event that you are traveling to one of the identified *High Risk* countries, the State of Connecticut requires that your child have a Tuberculosis test prior to the return of school (see TUBERCULOSIS SCREENING GUIDELINES FOR CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS- Connecticut Department of Public Health, Infectious Diseases Section- June 2011)

For additional information please visit the District website:

newtown.k12.ct.us/school-health-services



TRANSPORTATION

Bus Information

Beginning in August, information regarding bus routes is available on the District website (https://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/transportation) and in The Newtown Bee's Back to School Issue, usually the second week of August. Bus forms, such as Alternate Bus Request or Drop Off Waiver (no adult to be present at the bus stop) are also available on the District website.

A seat on a bus is provided to each student by the district. Children are to be at the bus stop ten minutes prior to bus arrival time. An adult needs to be at the bus stop when a child is dropped off unless a Drop Off Waiver is filled out. In the event an adult is not there and a waiver has not been filled out, the child will be returned to school to await pickup by a parent. There are no waivers for kindergarten students.

Students must ride their assigned buses and are not permitted to change buses for playdates. A student is allowed to ride a different bus for day care

purposes only if a request has been submitted to the bus company and approved.

Bus Behavior



The bus driver is fully occupied driving the bus and alert to traffic, pedestrians, and other hazards. Therefore, it is particularly important that children abide by the following rules of safety and courtesy:

- Students should sit by age/grade-level with kindergarteners in the front of the bus and 6th graders in the back
- Students will sit in the first available seat, filling them, as they continue to the back of the bus
- No student is in charge of where other students sit, the driver oversees seating
- Students must remain seated, face forward, and keep their feet out of the aisles
- Students keep their hands to themselves and are not to touch other students or their property
- Only appropriate language and quiet, calm behavior shall be permitted on the bus
- Electronic devices and toys are to be left at home
- Food is not allowed on the bus
- Pets should be left off the bus
- Objects should be handled with care-not thrown
- Bus windows shall only be opened with the consent of the driver
- Students must keep their arms and heads inside the bus
- Students shall assist in keeping the bus clean and orderly and shall refrain from causing any damage to the bus
- If a student is not to ride home on the bus on a particular day, please notify the school by note. If a child is to attend an after-school meeting for multiple weeks, only one note is needed.

Bus Sanctions

The bus driver will immediately report any student who violates any of the above regulations to the school. The principal/lead teacher will meet with and review procedures and expectations with the student. A parent meeting may be required if difficulties with behavior continue.

The principal may assign a seat or prohibit students who commit violations, either temporarily or permanently, from riding the bus. Parents will then have the full responsibility for student transportation to and from school.

To protect all students: Parents are NOT allowed to board our school buses. ***If you need to speak to the driver, please contact the transportation office at 203-304-9779.***

Morning Drop-Off Procedures

Students arriving to school by car must be dropped off in the drop off in the circle in front of the school between 8:45 am - 9:00 am. Be sure that there is a staff member present outside the building before releasing your child from the car.

Any student arriving after 9:00 am must enter through the front door and be walked into the office. Any student arriving in the office at or after 9:05 am will be marked tardy. Please note that instruction starts promptly at 9:05 am, your child should be in their class and unpacked by 9:05 am. 8:50 am - 9:00 am is a great time for kids to socialize with classmates and get settled.

If you are planning on dropping your child off in the morning please prepare them to get themselves out of the car on the curbside. Parents getting out of the car to unbuckle their children and children crossing in front of cars becomes a safety concern. We have staff outside that are assigned to help, please follow their directions and let them help.

We highly encourage parents not to walk their children into school at the beginning of the school year. We have systems in place that allow all students to get to their classrooms in an efficient and orderly manner. Using the parent drop off loop allows for students to begin the year establishing the habit of walking themselves to class. We know parents are anxious and we know students can sometimes be resistant to coming to school those first weeks, we have staff outside to assist. We have lots of experience with reluctant students and the first few weeks we are over-staffed outside and in our hallways to make sure everyone gets to their classrooms safely.

If you have something to drop off that your child can't carry we recommend you go through the parent drop off and then park your car to walk the item into the office.

Afternoon Pick-Up Procedures

Parents are encouraged to have students ride the bus home. The following procedures must be followed if you pick up your child at dismissal. **Dismissal begins at 3:37 p.m**.

Parent pick up will remain in the gym. Parents may park in the staff lot and walk around the right side of the building, through the playground gate and line up outside the gym doors.

Any adult picking up a child must be prepared to present a photo ID. Our staff changes from year to year, even if you think we know you, the new staff facilitating parent pick up may not. All parents must carry ID all the time, throughout the year a staff member may be filling in for another staff member at parent pick up and if they are not absolutely sure the expectation is that they ask for ID.

If your child is being picked up by someone other than who normally picks them up, please send in a note so we can reflect the correct name on the sign out list. They will be asked for ID.

Early Pick-Up Requests

It is highly disruptive to the classroom and not an educationally sound practice for students to be picked up early to attend an activity. Please do not schedule your child's activities until after the completion of the school day. We teach until the end of the day!

We do understand that some appointments are unavoidable during the school day, in that case just send in a note with your child to school letting us know what time you will be picking them up. This allows teachers and the office to prepare in advance and minimizes the disruption to teaching and learning. Students dismissed early will be called down to the main office upon parent arrival.

We will be monitoring early pick-ups closely, and it will be reflected on attendance records. If there is a pattern of leaving school early, school personnel will take appropriate actions beginning with a meeting with parents.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

ALL we ask of EVERYONE is to Work Hard & Be Kind!



Sandy Hook Elementary is a community containing over 350 students and 90 adults working together every day. We can only be effective if every member of that community treats everyone else with respect.

We are a Responsive Classroom school. We take pride in building community and making positive connections Adult to Adult, Adult to Student, and Student to Student. Hawley is OUR school and we all have a responsibility to make it a clean, safe, fun place that is conducive to learning for EVERYONE!

Students are expected to be honest and polite at all times, and to work hard to persevere, to be respectful of others, work collaboratively, handle conflict using their words and not their hands, and to ask for help when needed.

Bullying

Bullying behavior by any student in the Newtown schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school.

'Bullying' means *"the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic communication directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district, that:*

1) causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;

2) places such student in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;

3) creates a hostile environment at school for such student;

4) infringes on the rights of such student at school; or

5) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Students and parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of

bullying to teachers and school administrators. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying are verified, disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process.

In accordance with Public Act 11-232, *An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws,* our school has developed and adopted a **Safe School Climate Plan** which is available on the school and district websites. If you would like a hard copy of this plan, please contact our main office.



HOMEWORK

Homework is an important part of the instructional program. Although the classroom remains as the primary instructional center of our schools, homework assignments that are carefully planned, completed and corrected can have significant positive effects on learning.

Homework assignments are designed to reinforce skills and concepts that have been taught in the classroom. NO instruction should be necessary from parents. However, parents can support homework in the following ways:

- Ongoing independent reading (15-30 minutes daily) is among the most important homework your child can complete (assigned or not)
- Provide a quiet area, free of distractions
- Insist that homework be done early, before your child becomes tired
- Check homework to ensure it is complete and well done
- Offer assistance as needed
- Let the teacher know of any problems your child encountered

Each grade level collaborates and coordinates as a Team. Although homework may not be identical it should be similar in type and amount. An average amount of homework each day should equal to the following:

- Grades K-1: 5-15 minutes
- Grades 2-3: 15-30 minutes
- Grade 4: 30-45 minutes

If you find that your child is consistently spending much more time than the recommended number of minutes, or that you are required to heavily assist, please bring this to the teacher's attention.

Games / Toys

- In general, toys should not be brought to school since they are often disruptive to the classroom and the school cannot be responsible if toys are broken or lost.
- Toys that may cause injury on a busy playground such as skateboards, kites, silly bands, hard Frisbees, hardballs (baseballs and footballs), and bats are not allowed in school under any circumstances.



- Only soft, Nerf-type sports equipment is allowed.

Cell Phones / Electronic Devices

- All students have access to Chromebooks/ipads for instructional purposes. There is no need for any personal device that syncs to the internet.
- Parents of students who bring cell phones and other electronic devices for safety reasons should seek permission from the principal through a written note.
- Cell phones and electronic devices sent to school for safety reasons should be turned off and stored in a child's backpack during the day.
- Smart Watches are allowed to be worn as watches in school and must be removed during assessments. They may not be used to take pictures, watch videos or to send/receive communication of any kind. If so, they will need to remain at home.
- Misuse of technology will result in the device being left in the main office for parent pick up.

Sandy Hook School is not responsible for lost or broken toys/electronics.

Discipline

At Sandy Hook School we try to foster appropriate behavior through structure and routine and by educating the students about safety, respect, problem-solving, cooperation, and good citizenship. It is our hope that we can help the students learn to better understand the impact of and to take responsibility for their actions. Parental support and cooperation is needed.

Students at Sandy Hook School are part of a large family that includes almost 400 other children as well as over 90 teachers and staff members. We want them to learn how to:

* Solve problems in a thoughtful way

* Communicate with adults and peers in a courteous manner

* Admit to and learn from mistakes

* Accept the consequences for poor decisions

Dress Code Guidelines

A student's appearance has a direct impact on an individual's pride and consequently, on academic behavior. Poor hygiene can be a health hazard to the individual and the rest of the class. Therefore, we encourage parents to play a strong role in deciding how their children dress and in ensuring that they are neat and clean whenever they come to school. Children may not wear any clothing that may be disruptive to the educational process.



The following are examples of attire that may not be worn in the school during the academic school day or at school activities:

1. Attire or accessories that contain disruptive messages, obscene

writing or inappropriate pictures.

2. Attire or accessories that depict logos or emblems that encourage the use of drugs, tobacco products, or alcoholic beverages.

3. Hats, hoods or head coverings (Headwear for religious reasons may be worn)

4. Clothing that depicts vulgar, illegal, racial, sexist, or other discriminatory viewpoints.

5. Unsafe footwear such as flip flops (*are a hazard on stairs and playground equipment*)

Recess

At Sandy Hook School, we feel strongly that children need time to run, play and get fresh air. We go outside for recess as often as we can. Rain, thunder, and lightning keep us inside as does a temperature with windchill (feels like) below 22 degrees.

Unless there is a medical reason defined by a doctor's note, all children will go outdoors for recess. We suggest that you dress your child in clothing appropriate for work and for play. During the winter months, it is particularly important that children wear warm clothing and boots, or heavy enough shoes to prevent their feet from getting cold or wet. Again, we go out in the winter unless the temperature with windchill is below 22 degrees.



PARENT INFORMATION

Attendance

Except in cases of illness or emergencies, every effort should be made to have your child at school and on time so that he/she may gain the greatest benefit from the instructional program and participate with his/her peers in school activities. Frequent absences and/or tardiness are detrimental to the child's intellectual, social, and emotional development. Absences and tardiness are recorded on the student's permanent record.



As a result of the enactment of Connecticut State Legislation, Public Act 11-136, Newtown Public Schools has revised its regulations regarding student attendance and definitions of excused and unexcused absences.

The entire statute is on our school website for you to review, however, below is a brief summary of key elements:

- If a student is not in the building, regardless of the reason, they are marked absent
- Absences are either Excused or Unexcused based on the number or the reason

- Absences 1-9 are automatically Excused, regardless of the reason, as they are at the discretion of the parent
- The school will send you a Form Letter at absence #6 to keep you updated
- The school will send you a Form Letter at absence #9 informing you that documentation will be needed to Excuse future absences (if not Excused then they are marked Unexcused)
- The State outlines strict guidelines as to what is deemed Excused (after 9) as well as needed documentation
- After the 9th absence, if there are four Unexcused absences in one month or ten in the school year, administration may ask for a parent meeting to discuss attendance as well as next steps including a possible referral to the District Attendance Board
- The school will not prepare school work for vacations outside of the school calendar. Students will make up missed work upon return.

Please keep in mind that this Statute and guidelines were put into place to address Chronic Truancy. They are not designed to frighten parents into sending sick children to school or miss a day to visit a grandparent from out of state.

If you have any questions or specific situations that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Attendance Call

Parents are to call the school by 8:30 a.m. for each day their child/children will be absent from school for any reason. To report your child's absence, please leave a message on the school's attendance line by calling 203-426-7658. You may also email shsattendance@newtown.k12.ct.us. Please state your child's name, teacher's name, and a brief reason for absence. If you are to be away for multiple days on an unexpected trip, written notice covering all days can suffice. If a parent does not report an absence, a staff member will contact you in the morning to confirm the child is at home.

Tardiness

Punctual attendance is important; parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that students arrive at school on time. Students arriving to school after 9:00 a.m. will need to be checked in at the main office by an adult. For safety reasons, we can not have unescorted children entering the building and checking themselves into school. We will be monitoring late arrivals closely, and tardiness will be reflected on attendance records. If there is a pattern of tardiness, school personnel will take appropriate actions beginning with a meeting with parents.

Contact Information



At the beginning of the school year every family will receive an email from the District with instructions to complete the PowerSchool Enrollment Verification. This gives parents the opportunity to verify or change demographic information, phone numbers (home, work and cell), email addresses and emergency contact information.

<u>It is imperative that this information is correct and remains current</u>. Emergency and daily school communication occurs based on this information.



Emergency School Closings / Delayed Openings / Early Dismissals

The following plan has been developed in order to serve all students, parents, and staff members when weather conditions or emergency situations warrant the closing of school or changing of school hours.

1. The Superintendent of Schools, after consulting with local town officials responsible for maintaining roads, will make a decision regarding the closing of school, having a delayed opening or closing school early.
2. A School Messenger Emergency call is made using the numbers you listed on the Student Emergency Sheet filled out at the beginning of each school year. Please be sure this information is up-to-date.
3. These decisions will also be announced by radio stations and TV stations as well as the District and school website.
4. Please do not call school officials, police departments, and radio stations as these lines must be kept open for emergency business.
5. Please do not call the school.
6. *<u>It is imperative that parents develop an alternate plan</u> for the safety of children in the event school is delayed or dismissed early without prior warning. This plan should be discussed with your child in advance. Students **CANNOT** be brought to or remain at school in these instances as there is no staff available to supervise them.*

Emergency Drills



In order to ensure the safety of our students and staff, Sandy Hook Elementary School coordinates with district security advisors, as well as local agencies, in implementing emergency drills as required by state statute. Scheduling and practicing a variety of drills throughout the year ensures that students and staff know how to respond should an emergency arise.

During the first two weeks of school, we will be practicing every drill that we have. It is imperative that this information is current in our minds as well as experienced by new students (including kindergarten). These drills will be announced to students prior to being held – both by the classroom teacher, and by me via the public address system. Our goal is to ensure that all students feel safe and supported as we work through these first practices. Throughout the year, fire drills will be held and will typically be unannounced. If the weather creates a problem for a fire drill, we may substitute a different drill during the year.

The following drills will be practiced at SHS this year:

- ★ **Fire Drill**: The alarm goes off; staff and students exit the building using designed routes and report to a designated area.
- ★ **Evacuation Drill**: Staff and students exit the building using designed routes and report to a designated area. We then use 1 of 3 routes to exit the school campus.
- ★ **Shelter-In-Place**: Staff and students are directed to a securable location such as a classroom, library or gymnasium to await additional directions. Campus is closed to visitors for the duration.
- ★ **High-Wind Drill**: Students and staff are directed to previously identified areas within the building that will offer the greatest protection in a high-wind weather event.
- ★ **Safe-School Mode**: Students and staff are kept within the confines of the building but are free to move about and conduct business as usual. Depending on the emergency, the campus may be closed to visitors.
- ★ **Lock-Down**: This entails being in locked rooms and out of eyesight from doors and windows. Students and staff will walk through what to do in an imminent emergency that presents physical danger.

We fully understand that some of our students have not yet practiced some of our drills, and we will provide any necessary supports leading up to the drill to ensure that students are able to successfully and confidently participate.

We recognize that participation in drills may be particularly challenging to some children. Should you need to discuss specific concerns regarding your child's ability to participate in drills or have your own questions, please feel free to contact administration or your child's teacher.

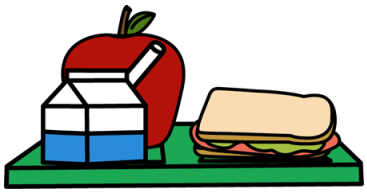


Lost and Found

Many items belonging to children are misplaced or lost during the school year. It is suggested that you label everything … sweaters, jackets, sneakers, boots, lunch boxes, water bottles, etc. If your child misplaces anything, be sure to check the "lost and found" located near the art room. Smaller items like jewelry and glasses are kept in the main office.

After a while, items in the "lost and found" are removed during the school year and then donations are made to local charities.Please discourage your child/children from bringing valuable items to school.

Lunch Program



Chartwells provide a daily lunch at SHS. There is usually a choice of a main entree, a weekly alternative, Fun Lunch or Sunbutter and Jelly. All lunches include fresh and cupped fruit selection and vegetable selection. Milk (fat free, 1%, or fat free chocolate milk) is available with every meal.

A Student Lunch is $3.10 per meal. Assorted Snacks and Beverages 75¢-$1.75.

Register now at: myschoolbucks.com to learn more and put money into your student's account.

The menu is published in the Newtown Bee and is also available on the SHS website.

If your child has a food allergy or intolerance, please forward a doctor's note indicating this information to the school nurse. The food service department will then be informed and this information will be available at the time of student meal purchasing via the POS system.

Parents are encouraged to send in healthy food snacks with their child/children.

My School Bucks My School Bucks is your online payment portal; giving you a quick and easy way to manage and add funds to your child's meal account. You can review recent purchases along with seeing the current balance, plus receive low balance alerts.

Enrollment is easy. Go to myschoolbucks.com and register for a free account. A confirmation email will be sent to the email address you provide; click on the link included in your email to activate the account and begin adding your child(ren). You will need the school name and student ID. You can add money to your student's account using Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card or debit cards, for a small fee. You can also download the mobile app for free.

Student accounts may also be funded via check or cash. To make payments at school, please send currency or checks in a sealed envelope with the child's full name written clearly, and instruct the child to give it to the classroom teacher to send along with the Café lunch count for that day. Payments to students' accounts will be posted within 12

hours of receipt or sooner. Checks should be made payable to Newtown Food Services. Please be sure that your phone number is on the front of the check. **Note: Due to time constraints, cash or check payments are not accepted during actual lunch service.**

Free and Reduced Price Meal Free or reduced lunches are available to students eligible under specific family income guidelines. Applications are sent home the first week of school and should be returned to Chartwells c/o Newtown High School, 12 Berkshire Rd., Sandy Hook, CT 06482 (attn: John Morris) no later than October 1 of the current school year.

Photo Use



Newspaper reporters occasionally visit the school to photograph children and teachers involved in various school activities. We also use photos of students and staff on our Facebook page. **For us to use your child's photo we need your permission which can be given by checking the box during the PowerSchool Enrollment Verification at the beginning of the school year.**

School Insurance

All students are eligible to participate in the district insurance program that is made available by an insurance company approved by the Board of Education. Information on plan benefits can be found on the NPS website:

https://newtown.k12.ct.us/student-accident-insurance-information

While participation in the plan is voluntary, you should be advised that the school district does not carry accident insurance on the children. If you feel your own insurance is inadequate to cover possible injury to your child, you may wish to seriously consider this plan.



Volunteering

We love volunteers at SHS. There are many opportunities for family members to be involved in our school community as a volunteer. Whether it is with the PTA, chaperoning field trips, as a guest reader, helping in the library, or coming in to help with a class activity, all of our volunteers are very much appreciated.

Each school year, volunteers must complete a Background Check Authorization Form and a Volunteer Information Form/Waiver of Liability Form. The form can be accessed from the NPS website https://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/volunteer.

The following is asked of all our volunteers:

- Please be on time
- Please report to the main office. Once checked in, go directly to the area in which you are helping and leave when finished. ***Visiting other areas of the building are not permitted.***
- It is the expectation that volunteers will work with and assist all children and not just their own child.
- Volunteers are needed to assist the students in the classroom and therefore we ask that younger siblings are not present. Toddlers and babies can divide attention or create a distraction. Their presence at classroom celebrations is at the discretion of the teacher.
- **Confidentiality** is very important to us as a school community. It is our expectation that anything observed or heard while at school is not discussed outside of school.

Legal Custody and Rights of Noncustodial Parents

If you are divorced and have legal custody of your child, please send us a copy of the legal decree. It is important for the school to be aware of any specific custody arrangements that would provide guidance to the school system about the rights or lack of rights of one of the parents. This way we can ensure that your child is only released to his/her legal guardian. Without such a decree in our files, we must legally release a child to either parent.

Non-custodial parents usually have the right to see written student records like progress reports and other regular records. We will make them available upon request.

Insofar as parent-teacher conferences and day-to-day communications are concerned, information will be communicated to the custodial parent. **In the event of shared custody, we would prefer one conference but are able to accommodate separate conferences if necessary.** If a non-custodial parent wishes to attend a regular conference, we recommend that he/she make arrangements to attend with the custodial parent, if possible.

Our main concern and focus is always with the child. School needs to be a safe, worry-free place. We will support and work with all family situations, but expect that all adults concerned abide by the terms and agreements- as will the school.

We are available to discuss any and all special circumstances and situations.

STUDENT RECORDS (Notification of Rights Under FERPA)

Newtown Public School policies regarding student records can be found at:

https://www.newtownpolicies.org/5125-confidentiality-and-access-of-education-records

NEWTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Newtown Public Schools Website

Newtown Public Schools Strategic Plan

School Calendar 2025-2025

District Safe School Climate Plan

District Non-Discrimination Notice

Newtown Board of Education Policies

The full text of all Board of Education policies may be found on the Newtown Website at the following link:

https://newtown-policies.campuscontact.com/New%20Policies