NATICK

NATICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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NATICK ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK

Bennett-Hemenway
Brown
Lilja
Memorial

NATICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
NATICK
WHERE EACH LEARNER DISCOVERS
A PLACE, A PURPOSE AND A FUTURE
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL
CULTURAL COMPETENCE
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Table of Contents

Table of Contents **2**

TRANSLATIONS **6**

The Natick Public Schools Commitments **7**

Natick Public Schools Mission, Vision, and Values **8**

The Elementary School Structure **9**

School Campus 9

The Principal and Vice Principal 9

Classroom Composition 10

Elementary School Schedules **11**

Specials 11

Schedule Planning 12

Elementary Allocated Instructional Minutes 12

Specials Rotation 13

Recess and Student Wellness 13

Recess Procedures **14**

Winter Weather Guidelines 14

Indoor Recess 14

Winter Clothing Requirements 14

Snow and Ice Safety 15

Toys, Fidgets, and Personal Items 15

Fidgets and Student Supports 16

Student Dress Code **16**

Purpose of the Dress Code 16

Clothing Expectations 17

Responsibility and Support 17

Dressing for the Weather 18

Physical Education Footwear 18

Lost and Found 18

Family Engagement **19**

Communication with School Staff 19

Requests for Teacher Completion of Outside Provider Forms 19

Our Approach to Collaboration 20

Field Trips & Celebrations 21

Field Trips 21

Classroom Celebrations and Events..... 21
Family Partnership..... 22
School Council..... 22
Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)..... 23
Volunteers & Visitors..... 23
Respect the Learning Environment..... 23
Remain in Assigned Areas..... 24
Respect Student Privacy and Dignity..... 24
Model Professional Conduct..... 24
Check-In and Check-Out Procedures..... 24
Conferences..... 25
Open House..... 25
Pets on School Grounds..... 25
Playground Closure During ASAP..... 26
Metco..... 26
Calendar, Schedules, Daily Routines & Procedures..... 28
NPS Academic Year Calendar..... 28
School Hours:..... 28
Student Attendance, Absences, and Tardiness..... 28
Family Vacations..... 29
Reporting an Absence..... 29
Late Arrival Procedures..... 30
Early Dismissal Procedures..... 30
Dismissal Changes..... 30
Student Absence Notification Program..... 30
Massachusetts Attendance Laws..... 31
School Attendance Requirements..... 31
Parent/Guardian Responsibility..... 31
Supervisor of Attendance..... 31
Educational Neglect Reporting (51A)..... 31
Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) Application..... 32
Inducing Absences..... 32
Pick Up Patrol..... 32
Setting Up Your Child's Dismissal Plan..... 32
Accessing the PickUp Patrol App..... 33
Android Devices..... 33

iPhone Devices 33
Health Services and Student Wellness 33
Communication with the School Nurse 34
Staying Home When Sick 34
Head Lice (Pediculosis) 35
School Nurse Responsibilities 35
Attendance and Return to School 36
Family Responsibilities 36
School Practices 36
Supporting Students with Care and Respect 36
Injury and Activity Restrictions 37
Emergency Information 37
Extended Medical Absences 37
Concussion and Head Injury Support 37
Immunizations 38
Physical Examinations 38
Health Screenings 38
Medication Administration at School 39
Food Allergies 39
Classroom Celebrations 40
Allergy-Sensitive Classrooms 40
Allergy-Sensitive Lunch Tables 40
Responsibilities for Food Allergy Safety 40
Student Responsibilities 41
Family Responsibilities 41
Teacher and Staff Responsibilities 42
Field Trip Safety 42
Working Together to Keep Students Safe 43
Student Health and Safety Crisis Response 43
Partnership in Student Wellness 43
Animals on School Grounds 44
Bringing Animals to School 44
Educational Use of Animals 44
Student Health and Safety 44
Service Animals 45
Kindergarten Screening 46

Kindergarten Screening..... 46
Entrance Age Requirements..... 47
Kindergarten Registration..... 47
Kindergarten Orientation and Transition Support..... 47
Family Partnership..... 47
Transportation, Safety, Meals, and Student Devices..... 49
Bus Transportation..... 49
School Closures, Delayed Openings, and Emergency Dismissals..... 49
Cancellation or Delayed Opening of School..... 49
Emergency School Closures..... 50
Emergency and Safety Drills..... 50
School Meals..... 51
Cell Phones, Smart Watches, and Other Electronic Devices..... 51
Communication with Families During the School Day..... 52
Consequences for Unauthorized Use..... 52
Responsibility for Personal Devices..... 52
Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) & Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)..... 54
Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)..... 54
Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)..... 55
Partnership with Families..... 55
Natick Public Schools Code of Conduct..... 57

TRANSLATIONS

学年简体中文版幼儿园至五年级学生及家庭手册 - 中文 (Chinese)

학생 및 가족을 위한 2025-2026 초등학교 핸드북 - 한국어 (Korean)

Manual de la escuela primaria para estudiantes y familias - español (Spanish)

Manual do Ensino Fundamental para Alunos e Famílias - Português (Portuguese)

Справочник начальной школы для учащихся и их семей на учебный год - Русский (Russian)

מדריך לבית הספר היסודי לתלמידים ומשפחות לשנת הלימודים - עברית (Hebrew)

The Natick Public Schools Commitments

Natick Public Schools mission and vision establish our shared commitment to creating learning environments in which every student can grow academically, socially, and emotionally and can contribute meaningfully to their community. Our District Vision—*Inspire lifelong learners who are empowered to contribute meaningfully to their communities*—provides a common direction for this work. Our district values—**Foster Belonging, Cultivate Character, and Inspire Excellence**—help define what that commitment looks like in practice across our schools.

These commitments are reflected throughout the district's strategic work. Our efforts to strengthen teaching and learning, social-emotional development, student engagement, belonging, school climate, and student support are interconnected parts of creating the conditions in which all students can thrive.

The District Code of Conduct translates our mission, vision, and values into a common framework for how we build safe and supportive school communities, teach and reinforce expectations, respond to behavior, protect student rights, and help students learn from challenges and make positive choices.

Each school builds upon this districtwide foundation through core **values, culture, and approach to creating a positive school climate.** Each unique school's community agreements, together with our shared district expectations, are essential to maintaining safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for each/all student.

Each school handbook reflects our unique identity by describing our shared values, culture , structures and expectations specific to our community. Together, our district mission, vision, strategic priorities, and the Code of Conduct provide a coherent framework for supporting student learning, well-being, belonging, and success.

This handbook reflects our unique identity by describing the way our school embraces these shared district values, and the routines, structures and expectations specific to our community. Along with the Code of Conduct, this handbook provides a clear and consistent framework for how we live out our shared values each day, supporting a safe, inclusive, respectful, and engaging learning environment where every student can learn, belong, and find success.

Natick Public Schools Mission, Vision, and Values

Natick Public Schools is committed to **inspiring lifelong learners who are**

empowered to contribute meaningfully to their communities. Together, we cultivate an inclusive community where every learner grows academically, socially, and emotionally through engagement in meaningful experiences. Our vision and mission reflect a shared commitment to ensuring that every student has meaningful opportunities to learn, grow, connect, and contribute.

VISION

Inspire lifelong learners who are empowered to contribute meaningfully to their communities.

MISSION

Together, we cultivate an inclusive community where every learner grows academically, socially, and emotionally through engagement in meaningful experiences.

Our core values—**Foster Belonging, Cultivate Character, and Inspire Excellence**—define how we bring this commitment to life across our schools. We foster belonging by creating welcoming, inclusive environments where everyone feels seen, valued, and respected. We cultivate character by developing integrity, empathy, and civic responsibility, and we inspire excellence by holding high expectations while providing the support every learner needs to reach their full potential. Together, these values shape the relationships, learning experiences, expectations, and responsibilities that define the Natick Public Schools community.

Foster Belonging	Cultivate Character	Inspire Excellence
We create welcoming, inclusive environments where everyone feels seen, valued, and respected.	We develop integrity, empathy, and civic responsibility in every member of our community.	We hold high expectations for all learners and support every individual to reach their full potential.

The Elementary School Structure

School Campus

Natick Public Schools is home to four elementary schools serving students in kindergarten through fourth grade. Each school provides a welcoming and engaging learning environment with dedicated classroom spaces, library, art, and music rooms, a gymnasium, and areas that support small-group instruction and student

services. Schools also feature spaces for lunch, assemblies, and other school-wide activities.

In addition to their instructional spaces, Natick's elementary schools offer outdoor play and learning areas designed to support students' social, emotional, and physical development. While each school has its own unique character and traditions, all share a commitment to fostering a strong sense of community and providing high-quality educational experiences for every child.

The Principal and Vice Principal

The principal serves as the educational and administrative leader of the school and is responsible for ensuring a safe, inclusive, and engaging learning environment for all students. Working collaboratively with teachers, staff, families, and district leaders, the principal oversees the implementation of curriculum and instruction, supports student achievement and well-being, and promotes a positive school culture.

The principal is responsible for the overall operation of the school, including supervision and evaluation of staff, implementation of district policies and procedures, management of school resources, and maintenance of a safe and supportive learning environment. The principal also works closely with families and support staff to address individual student needs and is responsible for decisions related to student placement, educational programming, and school-wide initiatives.

The assistant principal serves as a key member of the school's leadership team and supports the principal in all aspects of school operations. Responsibilities often include overseeing student discipline and behavioral supports, coordinating transportation and arrival/dismissal procedures, responding to student and family concerns, and assisting with school safety planning. Assistant principals also work closely with teachers, specialists, and support staff to promote positive school climate, support instructional practices, and ensure the smooth day-to-day functioning of the school.

Both the principal and assistant principal collaborate with families, educators, and district personnel to support student success and maintain high expectations for learning and behavior. They are committed to fostering strong partnerships between home and school and ensuring that all students have access to the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

When parents have questions or concerns regarding their child, they are encouraged to first contact their child's teacher, who is often best positioned to address classroom-related matters. If additional support or clarification is needed, families may then contact the assistant principal or principal. Questions regarding school policies, procedures, or broader school concerns may be directed to the school's administrative team.

Classroom Composition

Natick Public Schools is committed to creating inclusive learning environments where all students can learn, grow, and succeed. Elementary classrooms are designed to reflect the diverse strengths, interests, and needs of students. Within every classroom, students learn and work at varying levels and rates, and teachers use a variety of instructional strategies, supports, and enrichment opportunities to meet the needs of all learners.

Each spring, school staff engage in a thoughtful and collaborative class placement process for the upcoming school year. Classroom assignments are developed with the goal of creating balanced learning communities that support both individual student success and the overall functioning of the class.

When developing class placements, school staff consider a variety of factors, including:

- Academic strengths and learning needs
- Social, emotional, and behavioral considerations
- Positive peer relationships and classroom dynamics
- Student support services and programming needs
- Equitable class size and composition

The placement process involves input from current teachers, specialists, support staff, and administrators who know students well and can thoughtfully consider the needs of both individual children and the larger group.

In the spring, families are invited to share information about their child that may assist the school in creating a successful learning environment. Parent input regarding a child's learning style, social-emotional needs, or other important considerations is welcomed and carefully reviewed as part of the placement process. Requests for specific teachers cannot be accommodated.

As many factors must be considered to create balanced classrooms for all students, final placement decisions are made by the school administration. Administration

then assigns classroom teachers to the created cohorts. Considerable time and care are devoted to this process, and class assignments are designed to provide each child with a positive and productive educational experience.

Elementary School Schedules

Natick Elementary Schools design daily schedules to support the academic, social-emotional, and developmental needs of every child. Our schedules are carefully planned to meet the Massachusetts requirement of at least 900 hours of structured learning time while also creating opportunities for students to build relationships, develop independence, engage in movement, and enjoy creativity and exploration.

Each school day includes dedicated time for:

- Core academic instruction
- Social-emotional learning and community building
- Intervention and enrichment opportunities
- Specialist classes
- Recess, movement, and play
- Lunch and social connection

Our schedules also include built-in support through our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework. This allows students who need additional academic support, enrichment, or skill development to receive targeted instruction while remaining connected to their classroom community.

Services such as special education, counseling, and Multilingual Learner instruction are designed to complement classroom learning and provide students with the individualized support they need to meet their goals.

Specials

We believe every child benefits from opportunities to explore creativity, movement, and different areas of interest. All students have access to:

- Art
- Music
- Physical Education (PE)
- Library

Students in grades 1–4 participate in an additional PE block each week beyond the state requirement because we believe movement supports both physical health and learning.

Kindergarten students receive an additional Art block each week to support creative expression, fine motor development, and early learning skills.

Schedule Planning

When developing school schedules, we carefully consider:

- Instructional needs
- Student learning time
- Bus schedules
- Lunch and recess supervision
- Classroom routines
- Teacher planning and collaboration time

Providing educators with opportunities to plan and collaborate allows us to create the strongest possible learning experiences for students.

A generalized allocation of instructional minutes is provided below. Specific daily schedules vary by school and grade level and will be shared by classroom teachers at the beginning of the school year.

Elementary Allocated Instructional Minutes

Learning Area	Kindergarten	Grades 1 - 3	Grade 4
Phonics/Foundational Literacy	60	60	0
Literacy	60	60	90
Math	60	60	60
Science/Social Studies	20	30	30
Intervention	0	40	60
Community Meeting/SEL	20	20	30
Specials Rotation	40	40	40

Recess (and Choice Time for Kindergarten)	70	30	30
Snack	15	10	10
Lunch	30	30	30

Specials Rotation

All Natick elementary students participate in a daily **40-minute Specials block**, which includes:

- Art
- Music
- Physical Education (PE)
- Library/Media Arts

Specials rotate throughout the day and across grade levels.

Kindergarten students receive an additional Art block on the fifth day of the rotation. Students in grades 1–4 receive an additional PE block each rotation.

Your child's classroom teacher will share their specific Specials schedule at the beginning of the school year.

Recess and Student Wellness

Every full school day includes a minimum of 20 minutes of recess. Recess provides students with valuable opportunities for:

- Physical activity
- Unstructured play
- Social connection
- Problem-solving
- Developing independence and creativity

Kindergarten students participate in two shorter recess periods each day.

Recess Procedures

Recess is an important part of the school day and provides students with opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, fresh air, and unstructured play.

Students are expected to demonstrate safe, respectful, and responsible behavior during recess by following school expectations, including the core values.

During recess, students are expected to:

- Follow the directions of all staff members and recess supervisors.
- Use playground equipment safely and appropriately.
- Include others in games and activities whenever possible.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to themselves.
- Resolve conflicts respectfully and seek adult assistance when needed.
- Remain within designated recess areas.
- Use school equipment appropriately and return it when recess ends.

Students who do not follow recess expectations may be asked to take a break from an activity, participate in problem-solving with staff, or receive other appropriate consequences.

Winter Weather Guidelines

Student safety is our highest priority during winter months. The following school-wide expectations apply during cold weather and snowy conditions.

Indoor Recess

Students will have indoor recess when:

- The temperature is 20°F or below, or
- The temperature is above 20°F, but the "real feel" or wind chill temperature is 20°F or below.

Weather conditions are monitored using reliable weather sources and district guidance.

Winter Clothing Requirements

When snow is present on the playground, fields, or play areas, students must wear appropriate winter clothing in order to access snowy areas, play structures, and fields.

Required winter gear includes:

- Winter boots
- Winter coat
- Snow pants
- Gloves or mittens

- A hat or hood that covers the head

Students who do not have all required winter gear may still participate in recess but must remain on designated cleared or blacktop areas.

Families are encouraged to send students to school dressed appropriately for outdoor winter weather each day. If a family needs assistance obtaining winter clothing, they are encouraged to contact the school counselor or administration. Support is available and requests are handled confidentially.

Snow and Ice Safety

Recess supervisors may restrict access to certain areas of the playground when conditions are icy, muddy, unsafe, or otherwise present a safety concern. Areas such as hills, fields, or portions of the playground may be temporarily closed based on weather and ground conditions.

For student safety:

- Sledding is not permitted on school grounds.
- Sliding down hills, snowbanks, or icy surfaces is prohibited.
- Snowball throwing or snowball fights are not allowed.
- Climbing, jumping from, or playing on large snowbanks is not permitted.
- Students must follow all directions regarding restricted play areas and winter safety expectations.

These guidelines help ensure that all students can enjoy recess safely throughout the winter season.

Toys, Fidgets, and Personal Items

To support a focused, equitable, and safe learning environment, students should not bring toys, trading cards, collectible items, personal fidgets, or other non-school-related items to school. These items can become distractions during instruction, create competition among students, interfere with play and social interactions, and lead to disagreements, loss, damage, or concerns about items being taken or exchanged. Limiting personal items also helps ensure that students can fully participate in learning without unnecessary distractions.

Students who bring these items to school are expected to keep them turned off or stored in their backpacks and leave them there for the entire school day. Students should not share, trade, sell, or display personal toys, collectibles, or fidgets at school.

If a student repeatedly brings prohibited items to school or uses them in a way that disrupts learning or the school environment, a teacher or administrator may confiscate the item and arrange for a parent/guardian to retrieve it. Additional responses may be taken when appropriate.

Fidgets and Student Supports

Natick Public Schools recognizes that some students benefit from sensory or fidget tools to support attention, regulation, or participation in learning. When a fidget or other sensory tool is medically or educationally necessary, it may be provided or approved by the school as part of an appropriate student support, such as an IEP, 504 Plan, health plan, or other school-based determination.

School-provided or school-approved fidgets are selected with the student's needs and the learning environment in mind. Families should not send personal fidgets to school in place of school-provided supports. If a family believes that a student may benefit from a fidget or other sensory support, they should discuss the need with the child's teacher, school counselor, special education team, or administrator.

Student Dress Code

At Natick Elementary Schools, we believe students should be comfortable, confident, and ready to learn. Clothing choices are an important form of personal expression, and our dress code is designed to support student safety, dignity, inclusion, and belonging.

When students come to school, they are preparing for their important role as learners. The dress code supports a positive learning environment while respecting students' individuality.

Purpose of the Dress Code

Student clothing should:

- Support a safe learning environment, including appropriate clothing and footwear for activities such as recess and Physical Education.
- Allow students to wear clothing that is comfortable and appropriate for learning.
- Allow students to express their self-identified gender.
- Allow hairstyles associated with race, including texture, type, length, and protective hairstyles such as braids, locs, twists, knots, hair coverings, and other cultural or personal expressions.

- Allow students to wear religious attire without fear of discipline or discrimination.
- Support equitable treatment of all students regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, body type/size, religion, or personal style.
- Ensure clothing does not interfere with student identification, communication, health, or safety.

Clothing Expectations

Students are expected to wear:

- A top
- A bottom
- Footwear

Clothing must:

- Cover private areas, including genitals, buttocks, and nipples, with opaque material.
- Be worn in a way that undergarments are not visible.
- Not include offensive images or language, including profanity, hate speech, or pornography.
- Not include images or language promoting violence, alcohol, drugs, or other unsafe behaviors.

Head coverings, including hats, hoods, helmets, or other items, may not be worn when they interfere with student identification or communication. Head coverings worn for religious purposes are always permitted.

Responsibility and Support

The primary responsibility for student attire rests with students and their families/caregivers.

Natick Elementary Schools is responsible for ensuring that student clothing:

- Does not interfere with health or safety.
- Does not create a hostile, intimidating, or disruptive environment for any student.

If a clothing concern arises, staff will address it in a manner that maintains student dignity and minimizes disruption to learning.

Dressing for the Weather

Students participate in daily outdoor recess and should be prepared for changing weather conditions.

All students are expected to participate in outdoor recess unless the real or “feels like” temperature is below 20 degrees. During colder, snowy, or windy weather, students should bring appropriate outdoor clothing, including:

- Warm jacket
- Hat
- Gloves or mittens
- Snow pants (when needed)
- Boots

Students should bring an additional pair of sneakers to keep at school so winter boots can be removed during the school day.

Students without the full set of winter clothing will not be permitted to play in the snow.

Physical Education Footwear

Students should wear or bring sneakers on days they have Physical Education. If they do not have appropriate footwear they may be asked to use a pair of school provided shoes, or to sit and observe the instruction.

Tie or Velcro closure sneakers are recommended because they remain secure during movement activities. Students should wear clothing that allows them to participate safely and comfortably.

Lost and Found

Families/caregivers are encouraged to label all removable clothing and personal items with their child’s name.

Students and families should check the school’s Lost and Found area when items are missing. Many high-quality items remain unclaimed and are donated to charitable organizations periodically throughout the school year.

Family Engagement

Communication with School Staff

Natick Public Schools values strong partnerships between families and educators. Open, respectful communication helps support student success and fosters positive relationships between home and school.

Teachers and staff welcome communication from families and will make every effort to respond in a timely manner. However, families should recognize that staff members are responsible for supervising and teaching students throughout the school day and are generally not available to answer phone calls, monitor email continuously, be available for impromptu meetings, or respond to messages while instruction is taking place.

Families are encouraged to contact teachers and educators through email or other school-approved communication methods. If a conversation requires more time or discussion, families should schedule an appointment rather than expecting an immediate meeting or phone call.

As a general guideline, families can expect a response from teachers or staff within two school business days (48 working hours). Response times may be longer during particularly busy periods of the school year. Staff members are not expected to respond to messages during evenings, weekends, holidays, school vacations, or other non-working days.

If a matter is urgent and requires immediate attention during the school day, families should contact the school's main office rather than emailing a teacher.

Natick Public Schools is committed to maintaining professional, respectful, and solution-focused communication. We expect that all interactions between families and school staff reflect the same respect and collaboration that we seek to model for our students.

Requests for Teacher Completion of Outside Provider Forms

Families may occasionally ask school staff to complete rating scales, questionnaires, or other forms requested by an outside provider (e.g., Vanderbilt, BASC, Conners, or other evaluation materials). We value collaboration with families and outside

providers and recognize that school-based information can provide an important perspective when considering a student's needs.

To ensure that these requests can be completed thoughtfully and consistently, the following expectations apply:

- **You must complete the district Release of Information.** Send it to the classroom teacher and front office staff.
- **Please allow up to two weeks for completion.** Teachers will make every effort to complete forms in a timely manner; however, completing rating scales requires careful consideration of a student's functioning across settings and over time and must be balanced with the teacher's instructional and student-support responsibilities.
- **Responses will reflect the school's perspective.** Teachers will provide information based on their direct observations of the student in the school setting. They may not be able to answer questions about behaviors, experiences, or functioning that occur primarily outside of school.
- **Forms will be completed objectively and professionally.** Staff will respond based on their professional observations and available school-based information. Teachers cannot complete forms with the expectation that their responses support a particular diagnosis, conclusion, or outcome.
- **Forms will be returned directly to the provider.** Completed forms will be sent or faxed directly to the requesting provider using the contact information provided by the family. This helps maintain the appropriate professional process and ensures that the provider receives the completed information as intended.
- **Families should provide complete information.** When submitting a request, please provide the entire form, instructions for completion and submission, the provider's contact information, and any required consent or release documentation. If the provider has established a specific deadline, please communicate that deadline when making the request.
- **Advance notice is appreciated.** Families are encouraged to submit requests as early as possible, particularly when a form is connected to an upcoming appointment or evaluation. While staff will make reasonable efforts to accommodate provider deadlines, the standard two-week turnaround should be anticipated.

Our Approach to Collaboration

We see these requests as one part of a broader partnership between families, school staff, and outside providers. Our goal is to provide information that is accurate, thoughtful, and grounded in the student's day-to-day school experience, while also ensuring that teachers have the time and professional space needed to complete

these forms responsibly. We appreciate families' understanding that completing outside provider paperwork is an important professional responsibility, but one that must be balanced with the teacher's primary responsibility for supporting students and providing instruction.

Field Trips & Celebrations

At Natick Elementary Schools, we believe that meaningful experiences beyond traditional classroom instruction can deepen student learning, strengthen connections, and bring curriculum to life. Field trips and classroom celebrations are designed to support the educational mission of our schools by providing students with opportunities to explore, apply, and reflect on their learning in authentic ways.

As a public educational institution, our primary purpose is to provide high-quality learning experiences that support students' academic, social, and personal growth. For this reason, field trips and classroom celebrations are thoughtfully planned to connect to curriculum, reinforce classroom learning, and highlight the skills, knowledge, and values students are developing throughout the school year.

Field Trips

Field trips provide students with opportunities to:

- Extend classroom learning through real-world experiences
- Make connections between academic concepts and the world around them
- Engage with community resources, experts, and cultural experiences
- Practice curiosity, collaboration, independence, and responsible decision-making
- Deepen understanding through hands-on exploration

When planning field trips, teachers consider how the experience supports grade-level curriculum standards and classroom learning goals. Students are prepared before trips, actively engage during the experience, and often participate in reflection or follow-up activities afterward to strengthen connections to their learning.

Classroom Celebrations and Events

Classroom celebrations are an important part of building community, recognizing student growth, and creating a positive learning environment. Celebrations are designed to reflect and support the learning happening in classrooms and may highlight:

- Student accomplishments and growth
- Completion of meaningful learning experiences
- Cultural, historical, or curricular connections
- Classroom community and shared values
- Opportunities for students to reflect, share, and celebrate their efforts

While celebrations provide moments of joy and connection, they are planned with the goal of enhancing students' educational experiences and reinforcing the skills and values that support learning.

Family Partnership

We value the partnership of families in supporting student learning and school experiences. Families are encouraged to participate in and support school activities while recognizing that school-sponsored events and experiences are designed primarily to advance student learning and align with the mission of Natick Elementary Schools.

Through intentional field trips, celebrations, and classroom experiences, we strive to create memorable opportunities where students can discover, collaborate, celebrate growth, and see their learning connected to the world around them.

School Council

Each Natick elementary school has a School Council that serves as an important advisory group to the principal and school community. Established in accordance with the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993, the School Council provides input and guidance on matters related to school policies, practices, and the development and implementation of the annual School Improvement Plan.

School Councils are composed of representatives from across the school community, including the principal, teachers and staff members, parents/guardians, and community representatives. Through collaboration and shared discussion, the Council helps strengthen the partnership between families, educators, and the community while supporting continuous improvement efforts within the school.

School Council meetings are held regularly throughout the school year, and meeting schedules are shared by each school. All parents and guardians are welcome and encouraged to attend and participate in these conversations.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

Natick elementary schools value strong partnerships between families and schools and encourage parents and guardians to become involved through their school's Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). PTOs provide opportunities for families to connect with one another, support school initiatives, and contribute to creating a positive and engaging experience for all students.

Throughout the school year, PTOs often sponsor family events, educational presentations, workshops, and special activities that support students, families, and educators. These opportunities may include information sessions related to curriculum, school programs, and community-building initiatives.

Each elementary school has a PTO Board and offers a variety of ways for families to participate, from volunteering at events to supporting school-wide programs and activities. Through their partnership with school staff, PTOs help enhance the educational experience and strengthen the sense of community within each school.

Families interested in learning more about PTO opportunities are encouraged to review their school's PTO website:

Bennett-Hemenway School PTO
Brown School PTO
Lilja School PTO
Memorial School PTO

Volunteers & Visitors

Natick Public Schools believes that strong partnerships between families and schools are essential to student success. Families are valued members of our school communities, and we are committed to creating welcoming environments where families feel connected, included, and empowered to support their children's learning. Through volunteering, attending school events, participating in school organizations, and partnering with educators, families play an important role in building a strong school community.

Volunteers and visitors provide valuable support to our students and staff and help enrich the educational experience for all learners. To ensure that our schools remain safe, respectful, and productive learning environments, all volunteers and visitors are expected to follow the guidelines below.

Respect the Learning Environment

Volunteers and visitors are expected to support the school's core values and help create a positive environment for all students.

Classroom instruction and student learning are the highest priorities. Volunteers and visitors should follow the direction of the classroom teacher or supervising staff member and avoid interrupting lessons, transitions, or teacher-student interactions.

Remain in Assigned Areas

To support student safety and minimize disruptions to learning, volunteers and visitors will remain in the classroom, workspace, or area to which they have been assigned. Visiting other classrooms or moving throughout the building without authorization can disrupt instruction and is not permitted.

Respect Student Privacy and Dignity

All volunteers and visitors must respect the confidentiality, privacy, and dignity of every student. Information about students, including academic progress, behavior, personal circumstances, or classroom experiences, should not be discussed, shared, or speculated about with others.

Photographs, videos, or physical contact with students are not permitted without explicit permission from school staff and in accordance with school guidelines.

Model Professional Conduct

Volunteers and visitors serve as important role models within our schools and are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior, language, and attire for an educational setting. Conversations and interactions should remain respectful and focused on supporting students and staff. Gossip, criticism of students or staff, or behavior that does not align with our school values is not appropriate. Any concerns, questions, or observations regarding school operations, student welfare, or staff practices will be directed to the principal rather than discussed with students, families, or other community members.

Check-In and Check-Out Procedures

For the safety of all students and staff, all volunteers and visitors must:

- Check in at the main office upon arrival.
- Wear a visitor badge while in the building.
- Check out at the main office before leaving the school.

Thank you for partnering with Natick Public Schools to support our students and help create welcoming, inclusive, and successful school communities.

Conferences

Parent conferences are held during the fall and spring of each school year and provide an opportunity for families/caregivers and teachers to connect, share information, and discuss student progress, strengths, and areas for growth.

Families/caregivers will work directly with their child's classroom teacher to schedule a conference time. Each family will be given one conference time unless a legal document dictates other arrangements are necessary.

On the early release days designated for conferences, all visitors attending a conference must sign in with a building administrator before proceeding to the classroom. A sign-in table will be located in the main hallway for this purpose. After signing in, visitors will receive a Visitor sticker, which must be worn during their time in the building to help ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all students and staff.

Open House

Open House is an opportunity for students and families to visit the school, meet teachers and staff, learn about classroom routines and expectations, and become familiar with the learning environment for the year ahead. This event is designed to help students feel comfortable and excited about the start of school while strengthening the partnership between home and school. Families are encouraged to attend together, explore classrooms, and engage with school staff. To ensure that all families have a positive experience, parents and caregivers are asked to supervise children at all times, respect classroom materials and displays, and help maintain a welcoming and orderly environment throughout the event.

Pets on School Grounds

For the safety, health, and comfort of all students and staff, pets are not permitted on school grounds during the school day or during arrival and dismissal, including on sidewalks, playgrounds, or other areas used by the school. Pets may not be brought onto campus when dropping off or picking up a student.

Pets may remain in vehicles during car drop-off and pick-up, provided they are appropriately restrained, secured, or contained to ensure the safety of the pet,

students, families, and staff. Pets should not be permitted to exit the vehicle while on school grounds.

Service animals are permitted in accordance with applicable laws and district procedures.

Playground Closure During ASAP

To ensure the safety and security of children enrolled in the Natick ASAP after-school program, playgrounds at Bennett-Hemenway, Brown, Lilja, and Memorial Schools are closed to the public while they are being used by ASAP.

To provide opportunities for children throughout the community to play and connect after school, playgrounds are open to the public for 30 minutes following school dismissal.

When ASAP is not using the playground, all children are welcome. Playgrounds reopen fully to the public at **5:30 PM**.

Questions regarding playground access during ASAP hours may be directed to:

Megan Cap-Renzi, ASAP Director
Email: asap@natickps.org

Metco

The Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) Program is a state-funded, voluntary educational integration program that expands educational opportunities, increases diversity, and reduces racial isolation by providing students from Boston with the opportunity to attend public schools in participating suburban communities. Through this partnership, METCO brings together students from diverse backgrounds and creates opportunities for meaningful learning, cultural exchange, and community building.

Natick Public Schools has been a proud METCO partner since 1967, when the Natick School Committee established a pilot program that welcomed Boston students into the district. Since its beginning, the Natick METCO Program has grown into an important part of the Natick community, enriching schools through the experiences, perspectives, and contributions of students and families from Boston and Natick.

The mission of the Natick METCO Program is to provide students with educational opportunities that support academic growth, personal development, and meaningful relationships across communities. The program strengthens Natick

Public Schools by fostering a learning environment that values diversity, inclusion, and collaboration.

METCO students are welcomed as full members of the Natick school community and participate in the academic, social, and extracurricular life of their schools. Enrollment is based on available program funding, available seats, and completion of the METCO intake process.

Families seeking additional information about the METCO Program are encouraged to contact the Natick Public Schools METCO Office.

Calendar, Schedules, Daily Routines & Procedures

NPS Academic Year Calendar

School Hours:

School	Arrival	Dismissal	2 Hour Delay Start	Half Day Dismissal:
Bennett-Hemenway	8:05 am	2:41 pm	10:05 am	12:05 pm
Brown	8:20 am	2:56 pm	9:20 am	12:15 pm
Lilja	8:20 am	2:56 pm	9:20 am	12:15 pm
Memorial	8:40 am	3:16 pm	10:40 am	12:40 pm

Student Attendance, Absences, and Tardiness

Natick Public Schools recognizes that regular attendance is essential to student success. Daily participation in classroom instruction, discussions, collaborative activities, and hands-on learning experiences provides students with opportunities that cannot be fully recreated through make up work. Consistent attendance helps students develop academically, socially, and emotionally while strengthening their connection to their classroom and school community.

Families play an important role in supporting positive attendance habits. We expect families to schedule appointments, vacations, and other activities outside of school hours whenever possible and to communicate with the school when absences or late arrivals are unavoidable.

Excused and Unexcused Absences and Tardies

An **excused absence or tardy** may include:

- Illness or injury (families should notify the school through the district's designated absence reporting system)

- Bereavement or attendance at a family funeral
- Major religious observances
- Extraordinary family circumstances, as determined by the principal

An **unexcused absence or tardy** is any absence or late arrival that does not meet the criteria above. Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Family vacations during the school year
- Undocumented absences
- Non-emergency family situations
- Repeated or chronic absences or tardiness without appropriate documentation
- Truancy

When a student has been absent for five (5) or more consecutive school days, families may be required to provide documentation from a medical provider.

Chronic absenteeism impacts a student's academic progress, participation, and overall school experience. Schools will work collaboratively with families to address attendance concerns and provide support when needed.

Family Vacations

Natick Public Schools strongly discourages family vacations while school is in session. Absences during the school year interrupt the instructional process and may cause students to miss important lessons, classroom discussions, assessments, and collaborative learning experiences. While teachers may support students in transitioning back to learning after an absence, assignments provided cannot replace the instruction and engagement that occur during the school day.

Absences due to family vacations are considered unexcused, and teachers are not required to provide assignments in advance of a planned vacation.

Reporting an Absence

At the beginning of each school year, parents/guardians will receive information regarding the school's absence reporting procedures. Families are expected to notify the school when their child will be absent and provide the reason for the absence. Parents/guardians must also provide current home, work, and emergency contact information where they can be reached during the school day.

If the school does not receive notification regarding a student's absence, the school will contact the parent/guardian to confirm the reason for the absence.

Late Arrival Procedures

Students arriving late to school must report to the main office with a parent/guardian and be signed in before joining their classroom.

Students are considered tardy if they are not present and ready to begin the school day by the designated start time. Arriving on time allows students to participate fully in morning routines, classroom instruction, and learning activities.

Early Dismissal Procedures

For student safety, parents/guardians must follow school procedures when requesting an early dismissal. Families should communicate dismissal changes through the school's designated reporting system.

Students leaving school during the day must be signed out through the main office by an authorized adult.

Dismissal Changes

To help ensure a safe and orderly dismissal process for all students, families must communicate any changes to their child's dismissal plan through PickUp Patrol no later than 2:00 p.m. on the day of the change. Any dismissal changes needed after 2:00 p.m. must be communicated directly to the school's main office by telephone.

Please note that dismissal transitions begin approximately 20 minutes prior to each school's dismissal time. Once dismissal procedures are underway, the school cannot accommodate changes to student dismissal plans except in emergency situations. Families are asked to plan ahead whenever possible and communicate dismissal changes promptly to help ensure student safety and accurate dismissal procedures.

Student Absence Notification Program

In accordance with **Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Section 1B**, Natick Public Schools maintains a student absence notification program. Parents/guardians will be notified when a student has:

- At least five (5) days in which the student has missed two (2) or more periods/classes without an excuse during a school year; or
- Five (5) or more unexcused absences during a school year.

Following notification, the principal or designee will make reasonable efforts to meet with the student and parent/guardian to develop an action plan to improve attendance when appropriate.

Massachusetts Attendance Laws

School Attendance Requirements

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Section 1

Massachusetts law requires that children between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) attend school. A school district may excuse up to seven (7) full-day sessions or fourteen (14) half-day sessions within any six-month period when absences are considered necessary and appropriate.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Section 2

Parents and guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that children under their care attend school regularly. Failure to ensure regular attendance may result in legal action when a student does not attend school as required.

If a child fails to attend school for seven (7) full-day sessions or fourteen (14) half-day sessions within any six-month period, the school's designated supervisor of attendance may file a complaint with the court against the responsible parent/guardian.

Supervisor of Attendance

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Section 19

Each school committee is required to employ a supervisor of attendance. The supervisor of attendance has the authority and responsibility to investigate cases in which a child fails to attend school and may take appropriate action to support school attendance.

Educational Neglect Reporting (51A)

Under **Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, Section 51A**, a report of suspected child abuse or neglect may be filed with the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Educational neglect may be considered when a child under the age of eighteen is not attending school regularly.

Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) Application

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, Section 21

A school district may file a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) application when a school-aged child is considered “habitually truant,” including when a student willfully fails to attend school for more than eight (8) school days in a quarter, or repeatedly fails to comply with lawful and reasonable school regulations.

Inducing Absences

Massachusetts law prohibits inducing or attempting to induce a minor to miss school, or unlawfully employing or harboring a minor who is required to attend school.

Natick Public Schools is committed to partnering with students and families to support regular attendance, remove barriers to participation, and ensure every student has access to the educational opportunities available within our schools.

Pick Up Patrol

Natick Elementary Schools uses **PickUp Patrol** to help manage student absences, late arrivals, and dismissal plans safely and efficiently.

PickUp Patrol is:

Convenient
Families can make dismissal changes days, weeks, or even months in advance.

Automated
The system reduces classroom interruptions and helps staff accurately track where each student is going at dismissal.

Safe and Secure
Student information is protected, and the program is managed entirely by Natick Public Schools staff.

The Official Dismissal Record

School staff **must follow the dismissal plan recorded in PickUp Patrol**. Staff cannot make changes to a student's dismissal plan based solely on a student's verbal report, a note, an email to a teacher, or other informal communication. Any changes

to a student's dismissal plan must be submitted through PickUp Patrol by an authorized parent/guardian. This ensures that all staff have access to the same accurate and up-to-date information and helps us maintain a safe and consistent dismissal process for every student.

Setting Up Your Child's Dismissal Plan

Each August, families will receive an email from PickUp Patrol with instructions to set up their child's **default dismissal plan**. A default dismissal plan reflects the way your child will **typically** go home each day.

Please note:

- Default dismissal plans must be set up using a laptop or desktop computer.
- Once your child's default plan is established, families can access PickUp Patrol more easily through a mobile device for future changes.
- All absences, tardies, dismissal changes, including planned early dismissals, must be submitted through PickUp Patrol.

Accessing the PickUp Patrol App

The PickUp Patrol app is not available through the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. Instead, families should add the app to their phone's home screen through their mobile browser.

To access PickUp Patrol:

1. Open the browser on your phone.
2. Go to:
   http://app.pickuppatrol.net/parents

Android Devices

1. Click the three dots next to the app name.
2. Select **"Add to Homepage."**

iPhone Devices

1. Click the box with an arrow at the bottom of the screen.
2. Select **"Add to Homepage."**

Health Services and Student Wellness

Natick Public Schools is committed to supporting the health, safety, and well-being of every student. Healthy students are better able to participate fully in learning, build relationships, and engage in the life of their school community. Our school nurses partner with students, families, educators, administrators, and healthcare providers to promote wellness and ensure that students have the support they need to be successful at school.

The purpose of the comprehensive school health program is to promote positive health outcomes for students, support healthy decision-making, and remove health-related barriers to learning. School nurses provide essential health services, respond to student needs, and collaborate with families and staff to ensure that students with medical needs can safely participate in school.

The Natick Public Schools Nursing Department provides services including health screenings, management of chronic health conditions, emergency care, medication administration, illness prevention, and support for students with special healthcare needs. School nurses also serve as a resource and liaison among families, schools, healthcare providers, and community agencies.

Communication with the School Nurse

Families are encouraged to maintain open communication with their child's school nurse. Parents/guardians should provide updated health information, medical documentation, emergency contacts, and any information that may impact their child's ability to participate safely and successfully in school.

Families should notify the school nurse of significant health concerns, changes in medical status, new diagnoses, or extended medical absences so that appropriate supports and accommodations can be developed.

Staying Home When Sick

Regular attendance is important for student success; however, students should remain home when they are unable to participate safely and comfortably in the school day or when they may pose a risk of spreading illness.

Families should keep students home when they have:

- Temperature equal to or greater than 100.0 degrees: Student must be fever free for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medications (i.e. Tylenol, Motrin), before returning to school.
- Strep throat: Student may return to school after 24 hours of taking prescribed antibiotics and if feeling improved.
- Vomiting or diarrhea: Student may return to school once they are symptom free for 24 hours and have eaten regular food without stomach upset or other GI symptoms.
- Undiagnosed rashes: Contact your medical provider for an evaluation before sending student to school. A note from your healthcare provider that they are not contagious may be required.
- Severe colds and coughs: If your student cannot control/contain their secretions then they should stay home from school. You should contact your medical provider for any persistent cough/cold symptoms.
- Conjunctivitis (also known as "pink eye"): Students may return to school after 24 hours of treatment with antibiotic eye medication and when their symptoms have improved.
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease: Children with hand, foot, and mouth disease may return to school once they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication, feel well enough to participate in school, and any blisters or lesions are dry and crusted.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, the school nurse will assess the student and determine appropriate next steps. Students who need to leave school due to illness or injury must be dismissed to a parent/guardian or authorized adult. Students may not walk home alone when ill or injured.

Families are encouraged to contact the school nurse with questions about whether their child should attend school.

Head Lice (Pediculosis)

Head lice can occur in any school community and are a common childhood occurrence. While lice can be frustrating to manage, they are **not a communicable disease, do not spread illness, and are not related to personal hygiene or cleanliness**. Natick Public Schools follows evidence-based practices recommended by health organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and the National Association of School Nurses.

Our goal is to support students and families through prompt identification, education, and treatment while maintaining student dignity and confidentiality.

School Nurse Responsibilities

If a possible case of head lice is brought to the school's attention, the school nurse will:

- Maintain student confidentiality.
- Verify the presence of an active infestation.
- Contact the student's parent/guardian.
- Provide education, resources, and support regarding treatment and management.
- Provide a referral to the student's pediatrician if needed.

The school nurse may also assess siblings and close contacts who attend Natick Public Schools when appropriate.

Attendance and Return to School

Students with head lice do not need to be excluded from school during the school day solely because lice are identified. By the time an infestation is discovered, a student may have had lice for several weeks. Students may remain in school unless a parent/guardian chooses to dismiss their child.

Students identified with an active infestation should:

- Begin appropriate treatment at home.
- Return to school after treatment has been started.
- Follow the guidance provided by the school nurse regarding ongoing management.

Nits (eggs) may remain after treatment; the presence of remaining nits does not necessarily indicate that treatment was unsuccessful. Successful treatment should eliminate crawling lice.

Family Responsibilities

Families/caregivers play an important role in identifying and managing head lice. Families are encouraged to:

- Regularly check their child's hair for signs of lice.
- Notify the school nurse if head lice are identified.
- Follow treatment instructions carefully.
- Notify close contacts when appropriate.
- Complete recommended follow-up treatment if needed.

School Practices

To protect student privacy and reduce unnecessary stigma, Natick Public Schools does not:

- Conduct routine whole-classroom lice screenings.
- Exclude students from school solely due to the presence of nits or live lice.
- Send broad school-wide notifications regarding individual cases of head lice.

When communication is needed, the school nurse will determine appropriate notification practices while maintaining confidentiality and supporting the health and well-being of students.

Supporting Students with Care and Respect

Head lice can be stressful for students and families. It is important that students are treated with kindness and respect throughout the process. Head lice are a manageable childhood health concern and are not a reflection of a student, family, or home environment.

Natick Elementary Schools are committed to partnering with families to support student health, attendance, and belonging.

Injury and Activity Restrictions

If a student experiences an injury that requires medical treatment, including a fracture, sprain, concussion, stitches, or other significant injury, families must provide medical documentation regarding activity restrictions and return-to-school recommendations.

Students who have restrictions related to recess, physical education, or other activities must provide written guidance from a healthcare provider before participating in those activities.

Emergency Information

Accurate emergency contact information is essential to student safety. Families should update contact information throughout the school year whenever changes occur, including home, work, and cell phone numbers, as well as authorized individuals who may pick up their child. Emergency contacts should live within a 30 minute radius of the school.

Extended Medical Absences

Families should notify the school nurse and principal if a student will be absent for an extended period due to a medical condition, procedure, or hospitalization. The school team will work with families to support a successful transition back to school.

Students who are expected to be confined to home or a hospital for fourteen (14) or more school days in a school year may be eligible for educational services during the period of confinement. Families should contact the principal for additional information.

Concussion and Head Injury Support

Natick Public Schools works collaboratively with students, families, healthcare providers, teachers, and support staff to support students recovering from concussions or other head injuries.

Families should notify the school nurse when a student has been diagnosed with a concussion so that an individualized support plan can be developed to assist the student's safe return to learning and school activities.

Immunizations

Massachusetts law requires students attending public schools to provide documentation of required immunizations, including vaccinations for diseases such as diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, and varicella.

The law provides exemptions for:

- **Medical reasons:** A physician provides documentation that an immunization is medically contraindicated.
- **Religious reasons:** A parent/guardian submits a written statement indicating that immunization conflicts with sincerely held religious beliefs.

Massachusetts does not allow philosophical exemptions.

Physical Examinations

Physical examinations by a licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant are required for:

- Students entering kindergarten
- New students entering Natick Public Schools
- Students in grades 4, 7, and 10

Examinations must occur within one year prior to school entry or within thirty (30) days after entry, as required by Massachusetts regulations.

Health Screenings

Natick Public Schools conducts required health screenings in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidelines. Screenings may include:

- Vision screening
- Hearing screening
- Height and weight measurements
- Body Mass Index (BMI) screening

Parents/guardians may request exemption from certain screenings by submitting a written request, except when screening is required by law related to communicable disease prevention.

Medication Administration at School

When possible, medications should be administered at home. However, some students require medication during the school day to support their health and ability to participate safely in school.

All medications administered at school must comply with Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations and require:

- A written order from a licensed healthcare provider
- Written parent/guardian consent
- Medication provided in the original, properly labeled pharmacy container

Additional guidelines include:

- Medications must be delivered to the health office by a parent/guardian or authorized adult.
- Students should not transport or carry medication unless approved through a self-administration plan.
- Medications are stored securely in the health office and administered by the school nurse or trained personnel as permitted by law.

- Emergency medications, such as inhalers and epinephrine auto-injectors, may be carried and self-administered when appropriate documentation and approvals are on file.
- All unused medication must be picked up by a parent/guardian at the end of the school year or it will be disposed of according to school procedures.

Food Allergies

At Natick Elementary Schools, we recognize that every child has unique needs. Some students may need additional academic support, some may benefit from behavioral supports, and others may have dietary or medical needs that require special consideration. Our responsibility is to create a safe, welcoming, and inclusive school environment where every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

Many students have food allergies or sensitivities that require specific precautions throughout the school day. Supporting students with life-threatening allergies is a shared responsibility among students, families, and school staff. The following practices help ensure a safe environment for all students.

Classroom Celebrations

To support the health and safety of all students, **classroom birthday celebrations and school celebrations do not include food**. There are many meaningful ways to celebrate that do not involve treats or snacks.

Families are encouraged to connect with classroom teachers for ideas and suggestions for non-food celebrations.

Allergy-Sensitive Classrooms

Classrooms at each grade level may be designated as **allergy-sensitive, peanut-sensitive, or tree nut-sensitive classrooms** based on student needs.

If your child is assigned to one of these classrooms, the school nurse will provide families with specific information and guidelines. These classrooms are designed to help reduce exposure risks and ensure that students with food allergies can safely participate in all aspects of the school day.

Allergy-Sensitive Lunch Tables

Certain cafeteria tables are designated as free from specific allergens. These areas are monitored by staff members to help ensure they remain safe for students with food allergies.

Students are expected to follow cafeteria expectations, including:

- Not sharing or trading food
- Respecting allergy-sensitive areas
- Following adult directions regarding food safety

Responsibilities for Food Allergy Safety

Keeping students safe is a community responsibility. Students, families, and staff all play an important role in supporting students with life-threatening allergies.

Student Responsibilities

Students with food allergies are encouraged to develop independence and self-advocacy skills by:

- Taking responsibility for avoiding known allergens
- Not sharing or trading food
- Washing hands before and after eating
- Learning to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction
- Informing an adult immediately if accidental exposure occurs or symptoms begin
- Wearing medical alert identification when appropriate
- Reporting bullying, teasing, or threats related to food allergies
- Carrying their prescribed epinephrine auto-injector when appropriate and approved by their healthcare provider

Family Responsibilities

Families play a critical role in helping schools safely support students with allergies. Families should:

- Notify the school nurse of their child's allergies before the start of the school year
- Provide a list of foods and/or ingredients that may cause a serious allergic reaction
- Provide medical documentation and medication orders from the child's healthcare provider

- Meet with the school nurse and teacher to develop an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP), when needed
- Provide current, properly labeled epinephrine auto-injectors and other required medications before the first day of school
- Provide updated emergency contact information
- Provide annual updates regarding their child's allergy status
- Provide safe snacks for their child when appropriate
- Provide medical alert identification information when appropriate
- Encourage their child to wear medical alert identification
- Communicate with before-school, after-school, and transportation providers regarding allergy needs
- Contact Food and Nutrition Services with questions regarding menu choices
- Notify the transportation company if their child will carry an epinephrine auto-injector on the bus
- Attend field trips when possible to support their child's safety

Teacher and Staff Responsibilities

Teachers and staff members work closely with families and the school nurse to create a safe learning environment. Responsibilities include:

- Collaborating with families, students, and the school nurse regarding Individual Health Care Plans
- Ensuring access to communication with the nurse and main office
- Ensuring emergency medication is accessible according to the student's plan
- Communicating classroom allergy information and safety expectations to families as appropriate
- Participating in allergy awareness and emergency response training
- Keeping necessary allergy-related documents accessible
- Ensuring substitute teachers, student teachers, teaching assistants, volunteers, and support staff understand necessary precautions
- Helping classmates understand food allergies in a way that promotes inclusion, respect, and safety
- Responding to any symptoms of a possible allergic reaction promptly
- Avoiding food-based projects or curriculum activities when possible
- Preventing students from sharing or trading snacks
- Encouraging families to provide safe classroom snacks when needed
- Cleaning eating surfaces with soap and water before and after food activities
- Reinforcing handwashing before and after eating

Field Trip Safety

Field trips require careful planning to ensure students with life-threatening allergies can safely participate.

Teachers and staff will:

- Ensure all emergency medications and allergy action plans accompany students on field trips
- Ensure students with life-threatening allergies are supervised according to their individual health care plan
- Assign supervision responsibilities to a parent/guardian when possible, or to a designated staff member if a parent/guardian is unavailable
- Bring a functioning communication device on all trips
- Review field trip locations and plans in advance, including access to emergency medical care when needed
- Consider potential allergy risks when selecting activities and locations

Working Together to Keep Students Safe

Food allergy safety is a partnership. Through communication, preparation, and shared responsibility, families and schools can work together to ensure that all students feel safe, included, and ready to learn.

Student Health and Safety Crisis Response

Natick Public Schools is committed to supporting students experiencing significant emotional or behavioral crises. When concerns arise regarding a student's safety or well-being, school administrators will work with families and appropriate school personnel to determine next steps.

If a student's safety is determined to be at immediate risk, emergency services may be contacted, and the student may be transported by ambulance for additional evaluation and support.

Following a crisis, the school team will collaborate with the student and family to develop appropriate supports and a plan for a successful return to school.

Partnership in Student Wellness

Families are valued partners in supporting student health and wellness. By working together, families, educators, nurses, and healthcare providers help ensure that every student has the opportunity to learn and succeed in Natick Public Schools.

Animals on School Grounds

Natick Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environment for all students. While animals can provide valuable opportunities for learning and connection, the health and safety of students and staff must always remain the highest priority.

To protect student access, safety, and well-being, animals may only be brought onto school property with prior approval from the building principal, unless the animal is a recognized service animal as outlined in School Committee Policy.

Bringing Animals to School

Families, students, and staff must receive approval from the building principal before bringing any animal onto school grounds, including classrooms, offices, or common areas.

The building principal, in consultation with the school nurse, will review relevant health considerations and determine whether an animal may be permitted in the school setting. The principal's decision regarding animals on school property is final.

Educational Use of Animals

Animals may be permitted in school when they support specific curriculum objectives or educational experiences.

Approval may be granted when:

- The activity supports a clear educational purpose.
- Student health and safety are not compromised.
- The individual requesting the animal follows all conditions established by the building principal.
- Appropriate precautions are in place to protect the health and well-being of all students.

Student Health and Safety

The health and well-being of students is our highest priority. Some students may experience allergic reactions, medical concerns, or other health impacts related to animals.

Animals will not be permitted in classrooms, offices, common areas, or school spaces if their presence may negatively affect the health or safety of any student who accesses that area.

If an animal causes an allergic reaction or otherwise impacts a student's health, the animal will be removed from the school environment immediately to ensure that all students have safe and equitable access to learning opportunities.

Service Animals

Service animals are permitted in accordance with applicable laws and district policy. Families or individuals with questions regarding service animals should contact the building principal for guidance and required procedures.

Kindergarten Screening

Natick Public Schools is committed to ensuring that all children have access to the supports and services they need to be successful learners. Through early identification, collaboration with families, and strong partnerships between home and school, the district works to support children's developmental, academic, social, and emotional growth from the earliest years.

Under **Massachusetts Special Education Regulations (603 CMR 28.00, et seq.)**, public schools have the responsibility to identify children ages three through twenty-one who may have a disability and may be eligible for special education services. This responsibility, known as **Child Find**, requires school districts to locate, identify, refer, evaluate, and, when eligible, provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities who reside within the district.

Kindergarten Screening

In accordance with **Massachusetts Special Education Regulations (603 CMR 28.00, et seq.)**, all children entering kindergarten participate in a developmental screening process designed to identify students who may require additional support or further evaluation.

Kindergarten screening occurs prior to students beginning kindergarten. Information about the screening process is shared with families during kindergarten registration. Natick Public Schools' kindergarten registration process requires families to provide important information, including health records and other documentation, to support a successful transition to school.

The kindergarten screening process provides information about a child's development in areas such as:

- Speech and language development
- Early academic skills
- Fine and gross motor development
- Social-emotional development
- Other developmental areas that may impact school readiness

School staff, including educators, specialists, and school nurses, review screening information along with parent/guardian input and other relevant developmental or medical information. When appropriate, the screening team may recommend additional supports, monitoring, or a referral for a special education evaluation.

Families receive information regarding their child's screening results and any recommended next steps. The goal of the screening process is to partner with families and ensure students receive appropriate support as early as possible.

Entrance Age Requirements

To enter kindergarten in Natick Public Schools, a child must be **five (5) years old on or before August 31** of the year in which they enter kindergarten.

To enter first grade, a child must be **six (6) years old on or before August 31** of the year in which they enter first grade.

Requests for exceptions to age requirements are reviewed according to district procedures and applicable Massachusetts regulations.

Kindergarten Registration

Each year, Natick Public Schools provides registration information for families of children who are eligible to enter kindergarten. Families complete the registration process by submitting required enrollment documents, including proof of residency, birth documentation, physical examination information, immunization records, and any relevant educational records.

Providing complete and accurate information during registration helps the district prepare for each child's transition to school and ensure that appropriate supports are available.

Kindergarten Orientation and Transition Support

Natick Public Schools recognizes that starting kindergarten is an important milestone for children and families. Schools provide opportunities to help students and caregivers become familiar with the kindergarten experience, meet educators, and learn about school routines and expectations.

Prior to the start of school, families receive information to support a successful transition to kindergarten. Teachers and school staff work to build relationships with students and families and gather information that will help each child feel welcomed, supported, and ready to learn.

Family Partnership

Families are essential partners in supporting children's successful transition into school. Natick Public Schools values communication and collaboration with families and encourages parents/guardians to share information about their child's strengths, needs, interests, and experiences. Working together, families and educators help ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive in school.

Transportation, Safety, Meals, and Student Devices

Bus Transportation

Safe and reliable transportation is an important part of the school experience for many Natick students. The **Natick Public Schools Transportation Manual** provides families and students with the information, expectations, and procedures that help ensure safe, respectful, and efficient transportation to and from school.

The Transportation Manual outlines transportation eligibility and registration, bus routes and stops, daily transportation procedures, student responsibilities, and expectations for safe and appropriate behavior while riding the bus. It also provides guidance regarding bus safety, communication with families, transportation changes, and the district's response to transportation-related concerns or violations.

Families and students are expected to review the Transportation Manual and understand the responsibilities that come with riding a Natick Public Schools bus. Bus transportation is an extension of the school day, and the same expectations for respect, responsibility, safety, and appropriate conduct apply while students are traveling to and from school.

For complete information regarding transportation services, eligibility, procedures, and expectations, please review the **Natick Public Schools Transportation Manual**.

[View the Natick Public Schools Transportation Manual]

School Closures, Delayed Openings, and Emergency Dismissals

Cancellation or Delayed Opening of School

When weather or other circumstances require a school cancellation or delayed opening, Natick Public Schools communicates information to families through district communication systems, including email, phone, and text notifications.

Families should ensure that their contact information is current in the district's communication system. Information may also be shared through district communication channels and local media.

Families are encouraged to plan ahead for possible weather-related schedule changes, including delayed openings, early dismissals, or school closures.

Emergency School Closures

In rare circumstances, schools may need to close early due to emergencies such as severe weather, power outages, or other safety concerns.

When an emergency dismissal occurs, the district will make every effort to communicate with families using available emergency notification systems. Families should ensure that emergency contact information and dismissal plans are current.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss emergency plans with their children, including what they should do if they arrive home and no adult is present. Families may wish to identify trusted neighbors or alternate caregivers who can assist during unexpected situations.

Emergency and Safety Drills

Natick Public Schools works collaboratively with local emergency responders, including police and fire departments, to maintain safe schools and prepare students and staff for emergencies.

Throughout the school year, students and staff participate in age-appropriate safety drills, which may include:

- Fire drills
- Bus safety drills
- Evacuation drills
- Shelter-in-place procedures
- Lockdown and other emergency preparedness drills

Teachers and staff provide clear directions during drills and help students understand how to respond safely in different situations. Students are expected to participate seriously, follow adult directions, and demonstrate respectful behavior during all safety exercises.

For questions about school-specific safety procedures, families should contact their child's principal.

School Meals

Natick Public Schools provides breakfast and lunch programs for students at all elementary schools. Meal programs are designed to support student health, wellness, and readiness to learn.

Massachusetts provides free breakfast and lunch to all students through the statewide Universal School Meals Program, regardless of household income.

Families will receive information about menus, meal options, and payment procedures through the district's Food Services Department. Additional purchases or items not covered through the universal meal program may require funds to be available through the student's meal account.

Monthly menus and additional food service information are available through the Natick Public Schools Food Services website.

Cell Phones, Smart Watches, and Other Electronic Devices

Natick Public Schools is committed to creating learning environments where students can focus, connect with others, and develop the skills necessary to be responsible and engaged members of their community. The **Student Use of Personal Electronic Devices Policy (JICJ)** establishes district-wide expectations for the use and storage of personally owned electronic devices, including cell phones, smart watches, tablets, headphones, cameras, and other portable technology.

The policy is designed to support student learning, digital citizenship, self-regulation, privacy, safety, and equitable access to instruction. It outlines expectations for students across PreK–12, including specific guidelines for elementary, middle, and high school students, as well as provisions for instructional use, medical and educational accommodations, communication with families, device storage, and responses to violations.

Families and students are encouraged to review the complete policy to understand the expectations that apply to personal electronic devices during the school day, on school buses, and at school-sponsored activities.

[View the Natick Public Schools Student Use of Personal Electronic Devices Policy (JICJ)]

Communication with Families During the School Day

Parents/guardians who need to communicate with their child during the school day should contact the main office. School staff will assist in delivering important messages to students.

Students should not use personal devices to contact parents/guardians during school hours. If a student needs to contact home, they must request permission from a teacher or staff member and use the school office phone.

Students who feel ill during the school day must report to the nurse's office. The school nurse will assess the student and, when appropriate, contact a parent/guardian regarding dismissal or next steps. Students may not use personal devices to arrange their own dismissal due to illness.

Consequences for Unauthorized Use

In accordance with Natick Public Schools policy, unauthorized use, display, or audible activation of personal electronic devices during the school day may result in:

- Confiscation of the device and return according to school procedures.
- Parent/guardian retrieval of the device for repeated violations.
- Additional disciplinary action when students do not comply with expectations or staff directions.

Individual schools may communicate additional procedures regarding device storage and consequences.

Responsibility for Personal Devices

Natick Public Schools does not assume responsibility for personal electronic devices that are lost, stolen, or damaged. Families who choose to send personal devices to school do so with the understanding that students are responsible for caring for those items.

Students are expected to make responsible choices regarding technology use and to follow school expectations that support learning, safety, and respect for all members of the school community.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) & Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

At Natick Elementary Schools, we believe that every child deserves to feel safe, supported, connected, and successful. We recognize that students learn and grow at different rates and may need different levels of support at different times. Through our **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)** framework and our commitment to **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)**, we provide a proactive, school-wide approach to supporting the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of all students.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

MTSS is a framework that helps schools identify and respond to students' individual strengths and needs through layers of support. It is built on the belief that all students benefit from strong universal instruction and that some students may need additional targeted support to continue making progress.

Our MTSS framework includes three levels of support:

Tier 1: Universal Supports for All Students
All students receive high-quality, evidence-based instruction and support within their classroom environment. This includes strong academic instruction, classroom routines, positive behavior expectations, and social-emotional learning opportunities that help all students develop skills for success.

Tier 2: Targeted Supports
Some students benefit from additional, targeted instruction or support in a specific area. These supports may include small-group instruction, skill-building opportunities, check-ins with staff, or additional practice. Progress is monitored regularly to ensure supports are meeting student needs.

Tier 3: Intensive Supports
A small number of students may require more individualized and intensive support. These supports are designed based on a student's specific strengths and needs and may involve collaboration among classroom teachers, specialists, counselors, psychologists, administrators, and families.

MTSS is a collaborative process. Teams use multiple sources of information, including classroom observations, student work, assessments, progress monitoring, and

teacher and family input, to understand student needs and determine appropriate supports. The goal of MTSS is to provide students with the right support at the right time while helping every child develop independence and confidence.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

At Natick Elementary Schools, we know that social-emotional skills are essential for learning, relationships, and lifelong success. SEL is integrated throughout the school day through classroom instruction, school-wide practices, and supportive relationships with caring adults.

Our SEL instruction helps students develop skills in key areas, including:

- **Self-Awareness:** Understanding emotions, strengths, challenges, and personal goals
- **Self-Management:** Developing strategies to manage emotions, make positive choices, and persevere through challenges
- **Social Awareness:** Recognizing others' perspectives, showing empathy, and appreciating differences
- **Relationship Skills:** Building positive relationships, communicating effectively, collaborating, and resolving conflicts
- **Responsible Decision-Making:** Making thoughtful choices that support personal growth and the well-being of others

Students participate in developmentally appropriate SEL lessons and activities that help them practice skills such as problem-solving, empathy, perseverance, self-regulation, and responsible decision-making. These skills are reinforced throughout classrooms, shared spaces, and school communities.

We also recognize that challenges are a natural part of growing and learning. Students are supported in taking productive risks, learning from mistakes, advocating for themselves, and developing the skills needed to navigate both successes and setbacks.

Partnership with Families

Families are valued partners in supporting students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional growth. We encourage open communication between home and school and welcome collaboration when students need additional support. Together, we can help every student build the skills, confidence, and resilience needed to thrive.

At Natick Elementary Schools, our goal is to ensure every child feels known, valued, and supported, and has the opportunity to grow.

Natick Public Schools Code of Conduct

Natick Public Schools is committed to creating safe, supportive, inclusive, and respectful learning environments where every student can learn, grow, and participate fully in the school community. The **Natick Public Schools Code of Conduct** provides the framework for student rights and responsibilities, behavioral expectations, and the district's approach to responding to student behavior.

The Code of Conduct is grounded in the belief that students should be supported in developing the skills necessary to make responsible decisions, repair harm, and contribute positively to their school community. It outlines the district's behavioral framework, identifies violations and corresponding responses, and describes the due process protections that apply when disciplinary action is considered.

The Code of Conduct also includes important information regarding student rights, disciplinary due process, suspension and expulsion procedures, emergency removal, academic progress, and considerations for students with disabilities. These provisions are informed by Massachusetts General Laws and applicable state regulations and are intended to ensure that student discipline is administered fairly, consistently, and in accordance with students' legal rights.

Families and students are expected to review the complete **Natick Public Schools Code of Conduct** so they understand the expectations, rights, responsibilities, and procedures that guide our school community.

[View the Natick Public Schools Code of Conduct]

Principal Welcome

August 2026



Dear Ben-Hem Families and Caregivers,

Welcome to a new school year at Bennett-Hemenway! We look forward to partnering with you to create a year filled with joyful learning, meaningful relationships, and opportunities for every student to grow. Our goal is for each child to feel known, valued, challenged, and supported as a member of the Ben-Hem community.

The Ben-Hem Guide, together with the Natick Elementary Handbook, is an important resource for students, families, and staff. This document provide helpful information about our programs, services, expectations, procedures, and daily routines. Throughout the year, it can serve as a reference as questions arise and as your family navigates the many experiences that are part of life at Ben-Hem.

Our core values—**We take care of ourselves, we take care of each other, and we take care of our world**—guide how we learn, interact, and contribute to our community. A shared understanding of our school's practices and expectations helps us create a safe, inclusive, and engaging environment and allows us to keep our collective focus where it belongs: on our students and their learning.

Strong schools are built through genuine partnerships between families and educators. We are grateful for the trust you place in us and value your knowledge of your child, your perspective, and your involvement in our school community. By working together, we can help every student develop confidence, curiosity, empathy, and a strong sense of belonging.

I hope you find this guide to be a useful resource throughout the school year. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions, ideas, or feedback. I look forward to working alongside you and to all that our Ben-Hem Bobcats will learn and accomplish this year.

All the best,

Jordan Hoffman
Principal

School Mission

At Bennett-Hemenway, we take care of our community, each other and ourselves to make the world a better place. ***Students, teachers, staff, and families work together to bring our mission to life through a sustained focus on our core values.***

Mission:

At Bennett-Hemenway, we build positive relationships to learn, to take care of ourselves and others, and our community to make the world a better place.

Vision:

- Cherish all children and support their development as caring citizens
- Develop a joy of learning and master foundational academic skills that provide opportunities for learners to follow their interests in the future
- Create a welcoming community in order to:
  - Support and care for all students through an inclusive spirit.
  - Learn and be curious about others
  - Seek perspectives that are different from our own
  - Model and teach healthy relationship-building to support everyone's social-emotional success

Core Values

Core Values

We CARE about ourselves, each other, and our world.

The CARE element evolved from previous values work at Ben Hem. Historically, C.A.R.E. is an acronym developed and used to support pro-social behaviors and to

make our collective expectations for each other clear. Over time, CARE shifted to these three simple ideas: We take CARE of ourselves. We take CARE of each other. We take CARE of our world. Everything we do across our day can fit into these three buckets and help to frame our expectations for stakeholders across the school day.

Community & Collaboration

- Collaborative connections within our community that are focused on open communication, critical thinking and problem solving..

Academics

- Students analyze information and make sense of content as it relates to themselves and their world.

Resilience

- Students develop skills that allow them to persist and accomplish success when faced with barriers to meet goals.

Empathy

- Students are able to understand others' perspectives and listen with open minds to understand the people around them.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Ben-Hem's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework is a school-wide approach designed to foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment. By explicitly teaching expected behaviors along with social-emotional skills and reinforcing positive choices through a unified language, we empower our students to become respectful, empowered citizens.

Our Core Values: We CARE!

At Ben-Hem, our PBIS approach begins with explicitly teaching students what it looks and sounds like to live our core values: We take care of ourselves, we take care of each other, and we take care of our world.

Explicit Teaching and Positive Reinforcement

Just as we teach academic skills, we directly teach, model, and practice expected behaviors in classrooms and shared spaces, including hallways, bathrooms, the cafeteria, playground, assemblies, buses, and arrival and dismissal areas. Common language, visual reminders, and consistent routines help students understand what is expected and make positive choices throughout the school day.

All adults play a role in noticing and positively reinforcing students when they demonstrate these behaviors. Students may receive pawprint stickers or contribute class pawprints toward classroom and school-wide celebrations. Tangible acknowledgments can be especially effective when students are first learning a new behavior. Rather than replacing intrinsic motivation, they help students experience success and build positive habits, with the goal that the behavior becomes increasingly natural and internally motivated over time. When students have difficulty meeting an expectation, adults reteach the skill and respond with consistent, logical consequences and restorative practices.

Whole-School Rewards

As students demonstrate our core values, classes earn pawprints that contribute toward a shared school-wide goal. When we reach that goal, the entire school celebrates together with rewards such as a school-wide pajama day, whole-school recess, or a glow-stick dance party. These celebrations build community, recognize

our collective effort, and reinforce that every student contributes to making Ben-Hem a positive and caring place.

Interventions and Equity

When behavioral challenges arise, Ben-Hem focuses on reteaching expectations, understanding what contributed to the behavior, and helping students repair harm and restore relationships. Responses are developmentally appropriate, consistent, and responsive to each student's needs, with the goal of helping students learn more successful ways to manage future situations. We are committed to equitable and inclusive practices so that every student feels valued, supported, and able to participate fully in our school community.

Home Connection

Families are important partners in reinforcing our core values. We encourage caregivers to use the same language at home—taking care of ourselves, each other, and our world—and to notice and acknowledge when children demonstrate these behaviors. This consistent encouragement between home and school helps students build positive habits across settings.

School Traditions

Monthly Schoolwide Assemblies

We gather as a whole school community once a month to reinforce our core values and expectations and celebrate students who have been exemplifying our core values. Monthly assemblies also feature student performances and presentations.

School-Wide Celebrations & Spirit Days

Throughout the year, students come together for school-wide events that celebrate accomplishments, reinforce our shared values, and strengthen our sense of community and belonging. These gatherings recognize students who demonstrate Ben-Hem's core values and the many ways they make a positive difference in our school.

Every Friday is Ben-Hem Spirit Day! Students and staff are encouraged to wear red and yellow or their favorite Bobcat gear. We also welcome students with music as they enter the building, adding a little extra energy and fun to Friday mornings!

Cultural Arts Experiences

Through the support of our Cultural Arts program and PTO, students participate in engaging experiences that really enhance their learning experiences. These programs may include visiting artists, authors, performers, cultural presentations, and grade-level programs connected to classroom learning.

Seasonal and Family Events

Throughout the year, the Ben-Hem community gathers for events that strengthen family connections and celebrate our shared community. These may include family gatherings, service opportunities, appreciation events, and other PTO-sponsored activities.

Some of our most anticipated events throughout the year include the Monster Mash in October, Bingo for Books in the winter, Family Fun Night in the spring, and our Fourth Grade Morning of Poetry and Music at the end of the school year.

The Fourth Grade Clap Out is a special Ben-Hem tradition celebrating our fourth graders as they prepare for the next chapter of their educational journey. Students walk through the halls while teachers, staff, and younger students cheer them on, honoring their growth, accomplishments, friendships, and contributions to the Ben-Hem community. Families are invited to join us in celebrating this meaningful milestone.

Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

Arrival

All students will enter through the main entrance front doors.

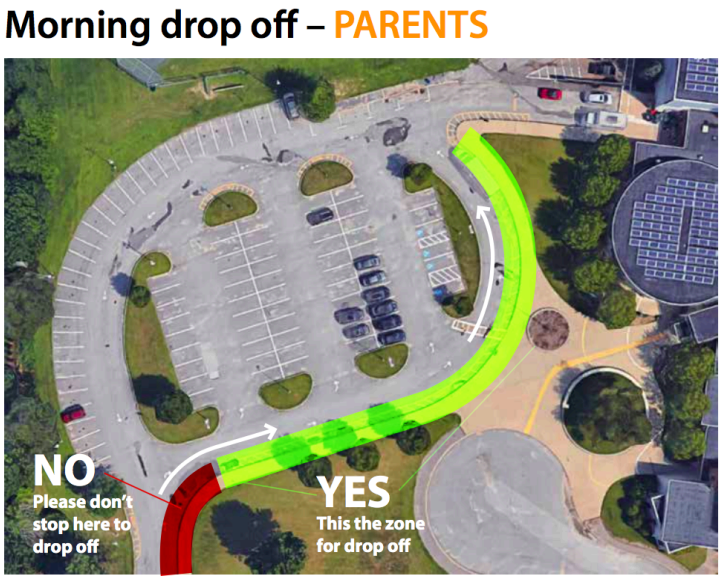
Students arriving by bus will be dropped off in the bus loop between 8:05 and 8:15 a.m. From there, they will enter through the front doors and proceed directly to their classrooms. Staff members will be available to greet students and support morning transitions, and classroom teachers will welcome students at their doors beginning

at 8:05 a.m. We will not have staff on duty to supervise students prior to 8:05 so please remain with your student until then.



Students **will not be admitted into the building before 8:05 a.m.** Once live car drop-off begins, families and caregivers may proceed along the fire lane at the front of the building. Students should be prepared to exit from the **passenger side**, and volunteers will assist by opening and closing car doors. Please remain in your vehicle so we can keep the car line moving. For safety reasons, please do not pass by other cars in the car line.

During morning arrival, East Evergreen Road is one-way. All vehicles must **turn right** when exiting the school parking lot. For everyone's safety, please remain in line until the vehicles ahead have finished unloading rather than pulling out into traffic.



Morning Drop Off Procedures

The morning drop off is a busy time in the parking lot. Ben-Hem runs a "live drop off." Families/Caregivers drive into the drop off loop and students exit the vehicles onto the sidewalk. Maintaining the safety and efficiency of the live process requires a collaborative effort between school staff and families.

Morning drop off – VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are essential for morning drop off. We keep traffic flowing so that as many cars as possible can enter the drop-off lane, allowing kids to get to their classroom on time. We also provide a warm welcome to students so they can start the day on a happy note. Here are some tips to help when you volunteer:



The drop-off line operates most efficiently with five family or caregiver volunteers stationed in the designated zones shown above.

Volunteers help keep everyone safe by:

- Alerting drivers to pedestrians
- Guiding students away from the curb after they exit
- Closing car doors so drivers do not need to step into traffic
- Reminding students to move carefully during icy conditions

Please remain alert while driving on and around school grounds.

Dismissal

Live Car Pickup

Families may enter the parking lot beginning at 2:00 p.m. and form a line along the fire lane at the front of the building. Please remain within the fire lane and do not block the loading dock or enter the hardtop area near the gym doors unless directed by a staff member.



Each vehicle must clearly display the student's last name for the entire time it is in the pickup line. We recommend clipping the sign to the passenger-side visor and lowering it during pickup. Another option is to attach a clearly written sign to a hanger

and place it on the rearview mirror while on campus. Thank you to Ayanna Hall for this helpful tip!

- Staff members receive a daily Live Car Pickup report through PickUp Patrol.
- Students' names will be called from the fire lane so they are ready in the correct pickup order.
- Live car pickup will begin after all walkers have been dismissed.
- Drivers should remain alert, avoid using cell phones, and maintain a slow, controlled speed.
- Each vehicle must come to a complete stop before students enter.
- Drivers should remain inside their vehicles throughout the pickup process.

Families are invited to enter the parking lot starting at 2:00 pm to pick up students through the live car pick-up process. Drivers will wait in cue along the fire lane in the front of the building. Drivers should not extend beyond the fire lane - blocking the loading dock or entering the hard top area near the gym doors until directed to do so.

Please note: We will assist in opening car doors but we are not able to assist in buckling students into the vehicles.

Walkers

Walker dismissal begins at 2:36 p.m. Kindergarten and first-grade walkers will be picked up from their classrooms and escorted to the designated pickup area by three staff members. Students in grades 2–4 will be called from their classrooms and supported by three additional staff members.

All walkers will be dismissed to their families from the East Evergreen fire lane near the fenced-in area formerly used as the preschool playground. Families and students should clear the fire lane promptly, as live car pickup will begin immediately afterward.

Bus Riders

Bus students will remain in their classrooms until their bus is called. Students will be monitored by teachers in the classroom. Bus staff will escort students outside to the bus loop using the main hallway. Grades 2, 3, and 4 should exit the second floor via the main stairwell.

Bicycles

Fourth Grade students are invited to ride their bikes to school with Families/Caregivers permission. Families/Caregivers need to communicate with the classroom teacher and note the dismissal plan in Pick Up Patrol. Students should wear a helmet. Helmets should be stored in their lockers during the school day.

After School Programs

Children who attend after school programs (ASAP, YMCA, Longfellow, Tobin, etc.) are dismissed to specific areas of the building or to program buses where program staff meet them and take attendance.

Ben Hem ASAP Playground Information:

To ensure the safety of children attending the NPS ASAP program, elementary playgrounds are closed to the public while in use by ASAP from 3:15-5:45 Monday through Friday. Hours will differ on early release days.

Changes in Regular Dismissal for Students

Natick Public Schools use **PickUp Patrol** for managing all dismissal plans and dismissal plan changes. Please login to PickUp Patrol each day that you will be dismissing your student before the regular school dismissal time or if your student's normal after school routine will change that day. You also have the option to enter dismissal changes for future dates. For safety reasons, the school cannot dismiss a child to anyone other than a Families/Caregivers or a specifically authorized adult unless written permission is received from the Families/Caregivers. There is a place for this authorization on the annual Health Emergency Information form. **(Changes in dismissal plans can not be accepted after 1:15 p.m. to ensure the safety of all students.)** We appreciate your cooperation with this practice.

PickUpPatrol™ **Enrollment Instructions**

PickUp Patrol is:

- **Convenient**: Make changes, days, weeks or months in advance.
- **Automated**: Reduces classroom interruptions and accurately tracks who's going where.
- **Safe and Secure**: All student information is secure and the program is entirely administered by our own school staff.

Each August you will be asked to set up your child's default dismissal plan via email from PickUp Patrol. Your child's default plan is "typically" the way your child will be sent home each day. **Please note that default plans can only be set up on a laptop or desktop.**

Once this plan is set up you will have the opportunity to download the app on your mobile phone, making it quick and easy to access the program for those last minute changes.

ALL plan changes should be submitted through PickUp Patrol.

The PickUp Patrol app is not found in the app store or google play store. You need to add the app to your homescreen from the browser.

To download the PickUp Patrol app:
From the browser on your phone go to
http://app.pickuppatrol.net/Families/Caregivers

On an Android device:
Click on the three dots next to the app name.
Choose Add to the Homepage.

On an iPhone:
Click on the box with an arrow at the bottom of your screen.
Choose Add to the Homepage

Staff List

Up to date staff lists can be found on the school website: Staff list

Principal Welcome

Dear Brown School Families,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year! As we embark on this exciting journey together, we are filled with anticipation for the adventures, learning, and growth that await our students.

At Brown Elementary School, we are dedicated to fostering a culture of inclusion and belonging, ensuring that every child feels valued and respected. We recognize that each student brings unique experiences, perspectives, and talents, and it is our responsibility to celebrate these differences while providing equitable opportunities for all.

Our committed teachers strive to create engaging and dynamic learning experiences that spark curiosity and inspire a lifelong love for learning. We celebrate our students' accomplishments and nurture a positive environment where they can explore, create, and grow.

Joy in learning, safety in our environment, and a strong support network through partnerships between school and home are the cornerstones of our approach. We believe that when these elements converge they lay the foundation for a successful and rewarding school year.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at jeven@natickps.org. We are eager to partner with you to make this year truly remarkable for your child.

Here’s to a fantastic year ahead, filled with joy, discovery, and growth!

In partnership,

Dr. Johanna Even, Principal

School Mission

At Brown School, we provide a safe learning environment which inspires all children to grow socially, emotionally and academically.

School Vision Statement

The Brown School community envisions an education of excellence for our children to ready them for the challenges of the new millennium.

- We value a sense of belonging for children and parents.
- We celebrate and appreciate each child's unique strengths and qualities.
- We welcome and encourage active parent/teacher dialogue regarding the curriculum.
- We value our diverse population in the Brown School community.
- Our staff, students, and parents value the resources the Brown School community has to offer and will continue our outreach program to further enrich our children's educational experience.
- We promote a cohesive staff, and an open and accepting climate.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Brown's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework is a school-wide approach designed to foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment. By explicitly teaching social-emotional skills and reinforcing positive choices through a unified language, we empower our students to become respectful, empowered citizens.

Our Core Values: PAWS

At the heart of our community is the PAWS acronym, which helps even our youngest learners internalize our shared values:

- **Practice Empathy:** Understanding the feelings of others and showing kindness towards them
- **Act Respectfully:** Treating ourselves, others, and materials appropriately
- **Work Hard:** Showing my best and working through a challenge
- **Solve Problems Together:** Listening to others and working as a team to find a solution

Shared Expectations and Positive Reinforcement

At the heart of our P.B.I.S. system are shared behavioral expectations in all spaces in the school, and a consistent approach to providing students with positive reinforcement when they are meeting those expectations and demonstrating our P.A.W.S. core values. Students earn PAWS (either a small paper ticket or a sticker) and the teacher will share the reason and connect the behavior to one of our PAWS core values (i.e. "You earned a PAWS for helping your friend on the playground. You were practicing empathy.")

Classes tally the PAWS they have earned to earn Golden PAWS. Schoolwide, we tally the Golden PAWS to earn schoolwide PAWS celebrations.

In addition to the PAWS tickets, individual students can earn a PAWSitive Office Referral. This is a special recognition for going above and beyond in demonstrating our core values or for being a model for others in consistently

demonstrating PAWS. Students who earn a PAWSitive office referral get a positive call home from the principal and are featured in our bi-weekly family newsletter.

Teaching Our PAWS Core Values and Shared Expectations

Teaching of our core values and expectations begins in the classrooms. Teachers teach and reinforce the core values and make meaningful connections to the curriculum (including our Wayfinder Social Emotional Learning curriculum) and daily lessons in the classroom. They teach and reinforce shared expectations across the school through the use of PAWS posters which outline how to practice PAWS in the different spaces in the school (cafeteria, specials, classroom, hallway, etc.) We also teach and reinforce our PAWS core values in monthly PBIS assemblies.

Interventions and Equity

When behavioral challenges arise, Brown uses a restorative approach. This approach shifts the focus from punishment to repairing harm and restoring relationships, ensuring that every student remains a valued member of the community. We are committed to equity, providing inclusive expectations and ensuring all PBIS communications are accessible to our diverse family populations through multiple languages and formats.

Home Connection

We encourage families to use the language of our Core Values at home to create a consistent support system. Suggestions for how to apply the PAWS core values at home, along with Social Emotional Learning and mindfulness strategies are included in the Brown School Family newsletters.

School Traditions

At Brown School, traditions and school events play an important role in building a strong sense of belonging, connection, and community. Throughout the year, students, staff, and families come together to celebrate learning, recognize student growth, strengthen relationships, and create lasting memories.

These shared experiences bring Brown's core values of Practice Empathy, Act Respectfully, Work Hard, and Solve Problems together. They provide opportunities for students to celebrate one another, contribute to our school community, and feel valued as an important part of the Brown Bear family.

From annual traditions to school-wide celebrations and family events, these experiences help create a welcoming environment where every student feels connected, supported, and proud to be part of Brown Elementary School. Traditions include:

School-Wide Celebrations

Students come together throughout the year for school-wide events that celebrate accomplishments, reinforce our shared values, and build a sense of belonging. These celebrations highlight students who demonstrate Brown's core values and recognize the many ways students contribute positively to our community.

Monthly PAWS Assemblies

We gather as a whole school community once a month to reinforce our PAWS core values and expectations and celebrate students who have been exemplifying our PAWS core values. PAWS assemblies also feature student performances and presentations.

Cultural Arts Experiences

Through the support of our Cultural Arts program and PTO, students participate in engaging experiences that bring learning to life. These experiences may include visiting artists, authors, performers, cultural presentations, and grade-level programs connected to classroom learning.

Seasonal and Family Events

Throughout the year, the Brown community gathers for events that strengthen family connections and celebrate our shared community. These may include family gatherings, service opportunities, appreciation events, and other PTO-sponsored activities.

Brown School Fun Run

The Brown School Fun Run is an exciting annual event sponsored by our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) that brings together students, families, and the entire school community for a day of fitness and fun. The event features a 5K timed race for competitive runners and fitness enthusiasts, as well as a 50-yard Monster Dash designed for our youngest participants to enjoy. Beyond the races, families can look forward to a variety of activities including pony rides, a petting zoo, live entertainment from a DJ, and informational booths hosted by local community organizations. This beloved tradition not only promotes health and wellness but also strengthens the bonds between our school and the wider community, creating lasting memories for students and families alike.

Pancake Breakfast

The Brown School Pancake Breakfast is a delightful fall tradition held each November and sponsored by our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). This warm and welcoming event invites students, families, and staff to gather together for a delicious morning meal featuring fluffy pancakes, breakfast favorites, and plenty of community spirit. The Pancake Breakfast provides a wonderful opportunity for families to connect with one another in a relaxed setting while supporting our school community.

March Madness

March Madness is an exciting, month-long reading tournament where the librarian selects 16 recently published children's books to compete in a bracket-style competition, just like the famous basketball tournament. Over four thrilling rounds, the entire school community participates by reading the competing titles and casting votes for their favorites. The energy builds with each round as students discuss their picks, debate which books deserve to move forward, and rally support for their top choices. The tournament culminates in a whole-school reveal celebration assembly where the winning book is announced amid cheers and excitement, crowning one exceptional story as the year's March Madness champion and inspiring countless students to pick up that title and the other tournament contenders.

Field Day

The Brown School Field Day is an energetic and highly anticipated end-of-year celebration that brings students together for a day filled with outdoor games, friendly competition, and team-building activities. This exciting event features a variety of

fun challenges and athletic stations designed to promote physical fitness, fair play, and school spirit across all grade levels. Family volunteers play a vital role in making Field Day a success, generously donating their time to help set up activities, supervise stations, and cheer on our students throughout the day. Throughout the event, students demonstrate our PAWS core values by practicing empathy with their teammates, acting respectfully toward competitors, working hard at each challenge, and solving problems together as they navigate the day's activities. With its combination of active play, community involvement, and joyful camaraderie, Field Day creates lasting memories and serves as a perfect culmination to the school year, showcasing the collaborative spirit that defines the Brown School community.

Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

Arrival

Morning Arrival
8:20 am to 8:30 am - School begins at 8:30

Morning Car Drop Off

All cars for student drop-off should stay in one line on the right side of Phillip J Lucier Drive. At the stop sign, take a left to drive in front of Kennedy Middle School towards Brown School. If traffic doesn't allow you to take a left at the stop sign, take a right and drive around the island next to Kennedy. Follow along the road until you are in the "Drop Off Zone". Staff will open the car door and let students out. Your student must exit on the ***passenger*** *side*. Staff members will ensure that students enter the correct door. Students need to be able to unbuckle as well as buckle their carseat or seatbelt as drivers are not allowed to exit their vehicles in the active pick up line. Please practice this at home as it makes for a safer and more efficient process. If students still need assistance, please wait in the line until you have reached the very front of the line before exiting your vehicle. There is no drop-off allowed prior to 8:20 as there is no supervision outside.



Door Numbers for For Front Door Arrivals Only

Kindergarten- **Door 19**
First Grade- **Door 17**
Second Grade- **Door 20**
Third & Fourth grades- **Door 1/Front Door**

Walking Drop Off

All students who will be walking to or from school must use the backdoor, Door 9, of Brown School, located at the bottom of the ramp from Hartford Street. Even if you are arriving from Mill Street, you will walk along the sidewalk, past the playground, to the back of the school. The back door is for all grade levels.

Bus Arrival

Buses drop off students on the side of Brown School (along the gymnasium). This lane is designated for buses only and cars are prohibited from being in this area. At 8:20 staff are on duty and the buses are unloaded.

Late Arrivals

If you arrive later than 8:30 am, you must park in a designated space and walk your child into the office. If you know that your child will be late/tardy please use Pick Up Patrol to enter the late arrival.

Parking

Parking is allowed in the front parking lot only. Please observe the 10mph speed limit and remember that u-turns are illegal on Jean Burke Drive. Handicapped parking is available in front of Brown School.

Dismissal

Afternoon Dismissal

2:56 Kindergarten - 4th

Early Release

12:15 Kindergarten -4th



Front Door Curbside Pick Up

All cars for student drop-off should stay in one line on the right side of Phillip J Lucier Drive. At the stop sign, take a right and drive around the island next to Kennedy. Follow the road past the front door of Kennedy Middle School. Proceed until you are in the "Pick Up Zone" where staff will let your student get into the car. Please display the ORANGE Pick Up Sign with your child's name in the front window of your car on the passenger side (You will receive a pick-up sign on the 1st day of school). Your child will enter the car on the passenger side. Drivers should not exit the car for any reason during live car pick up.

Please note: We will assist in opening car doors but we are not able to assist in buckling students into the vehicles. If your child needs assistance with buckling, please pull all the way to the front of the line and we will bring your student to you. Guardian assistance with buckling should only happen at the very front of the line.

Back Door Walkers Pick Up

If you would like to pick your child up as a walker, they will exit the building via the back door of the school near Hartford Street. Children going to the Barnesdale neighborhood will be released to walk home using the sidewalks and crosswalk. Students going home via Hartford Street will exit the backdoor and a teacher will help them cross the parking lot to the ramp. The children will be crossed by the crossing guard at the top of the hill. **Kindergarten parents will need to come to the back door to pick up your child.**

Bus Dismissal

Students riding buses will be called to sit in their bus lines in the gym. The buses will pull up to the side of the school, and a staff member will walk each bus line to their bus. The staff member checks off each student as they load the bus. Bus lists are

generated through PUP so it is important to update your dismissal plan when it changes.

Bicycles

Fourth Grade students are invited to ride their bikes to school with parent permission. Parents need to communicate with the classroom teacher and note the dismissal plan in Pick Up Patrol as a Back Door Walker with a note that they are riding a bicycle. Students should wear a helmet. Helmets are safely stored in their lockers during the school day.

After School Programs

Children who attend after school programs (ASAP, Longfellow, Tobin, etc.) are dismissed to specific areas of the building where program staff meet them and take attendance.

Changes in Regular Dismissal for Students

Natick Public Schools use **PickUp Patrol** for managing all dismissal plans and dismissal plan changes for elementary school students. **Changes in dismissal plans can not be accepted after 1:30 p.m. to ensure the safety of all students.**

Please login to PickUp Patrol each day that you will be dismissing your student before the regular school dismissal time or if your student's normal after school routine will change that day. You also have the option to enter dismissal changes for future dates. For safety reasons, the school cannot dismiss a child to anyone other than a parent or a specifically authorized adult unless written permission is received from the parent. There is a place for this authorization on the annual Health Emergency Information form. We appreciate your cooperation with this practice.

PickUpPatrol™

Enrollment Instructions

PickUp Patrol is:

- **Convenient**: Make changes, days, weeks or months in advance.
- **Automated**: Reduces classroom interruptions and accurately tracks who's going where.

- **Safe and Secure**: All student information is secure and the program is entirely administered by our own school staff.

Each August you will be asked to set up your child's default dismissal plan via email from PickUp Patrol. Your child's default plan is "typically" the way your child will be sent home each day.

ALL plan changes should be submitted through PickUp Patrol.

The PickUp Patrol app is not found in the app store or google play store. You need to add the app to your homescreen from the browser.
To download the PickUp Patrol app:
From the browser on your phone go to http://app.pickuppatrol.net/parents

On an Android device:
Click on the three dots next to the app name.
Choose Add to the Homepage.

On an iPhone:
Click on the box with an arrow at the bottom of your screen.
Choose Add to the Homepage

Staff List

Up to date staff lists can be found on the school website: [Staff list]

Principal Welcome

Dear Lilja Families,

Welcome to a new school year at Lilja Elementary School! We are excited for the year ahead and look forward to partnering with you to create a school experience filled with meaningful learning, joyful moments, strong relationships, and opportunities for every student to grow.

The Lilja Guide, together with the Natick Elementary Handbook, serves as an important resource for students, families, and staff. These resources provide information about our programs, services, traditions, expectations, policies, and procedures, helping our community understand how we work together to create a safe, supportive, and engaging learning environment.

Throughout the school year, this guide will serve as a reference as questions arise and as you navigate the many routines and experiences that make up life at Lilja. We expect families to take time to become familiar with the information included, as a shared understanding of our practices allows us to operate smoothly and keeps our focus where it belongs: supporting students and their learning.

At Lilja, we believe that strong schools are built through partnership. Our students thrive when families and educators work together to foster curiosity, empathy, perseverance, and a sense of belonging. We are grateful for the trust you place in us each day and look forward to the many ways we will collaborate to support your child.

We hope you find this guide to be a helpful and practical resource throughout the year. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions, ideas, or feedback. I welcome the opportunity to work together to ensure Lilja continues to be a place where every student feels known, valued, and supported.

Wishing you and your family a wonderful school year!

Best,
Dr. Shelby Marscher
Principal

School Mission

The mission of Lilja School is to create a supportive, inclusive community that inspires everyone to be learners, reach their full potential, and become respectful, empowered citizens.

School Vision Statement

Lilja is committed to nurturing a passion for learning that lasts a lifetime, recognizing it as the cornerstone of each child's future achievements. We believe natural curiosity serves as a powerful motivator for growth and knowledge acquisition.

Our school culture is defined by a set of common values, fostering close partnerships, providing a secure learning atmosphere, and blending academic challenge with the joy of hands-on experiential learning that encourages cooperation and teamwork.

Lilja celebrates and embraces the beauty of diversity in all its forms. We believe that every student brings a unique perspective and set of experiences that enrich our school community.

Core Values

The purpose of our Core Values is to establish a common language and set of expectations that guide our students' behavior. These values help us teach and reinforce the behaviors we want to see, fostering a culture of respect, responsibility, and kindness. Core Values are most powerful at young ages when they are in the form of a mnemonic (Mnemonics are commonly used in education to assist students in retaining facts, lists, or complex concepts by linking them to familiar or easily recalled elements).

In the 2024-2025 school year input was gathered from faculty, students, and families regarding the traits we feel embody a Lilja Lion. The suggestions from all stakeholders were then cross referenced with Natick's Profile of a Graduate and the CASEL Framework to identify core values that were representative of our community, connected to Natick's vision, and in line with the evidence based standards.

Lilja's Core Values are:

- Perseverance: Never giving up, even when something is hard or takes a long time.
- Respect: Treating others, objects, and spaces, kindly and fairly.
- Inclusivity: Making sure everyone feels welcome and included and able to participate.
- Dependability: Being someone others can count on, doing what you say you will do, and showing up when it matters
- Empathy: Understanding and caring how someone else feels

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Lilja's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework is a school-wide approach designed to foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment. By explicitly teaching social-emotional skills and reinforcing positive choices through a unified language, we empower our students to become respectful, empowered citizens.

Our Core Values: PRIDE

At the heart of our community is the PRIDE mnemonic, which helps even our youngest learners internalize our shared values:

- **Perseverance:** Never giving up, even when tasks are hard or take a long time.
- **Respect:** Treating others, objects, and shared spaces kindly and fairly.
- **Inclusivity:** Making sure everyone feels welcome, safe, and able to participate.
- **Dependability:** Being a reliable teammate that others can count on.
- **Empathy:** Understanding and caring about how someone else feels.

The Compliment System: Positive Reinforcement

The **Compliment System** is our primary method for recognizing and reinforcing these values. At Lilja, we use the specific term **"Compliment"** to provide a common language across all staff and students.

The Compliment Formula

To ensure feedback is meaningful, staff use a specific formula: Identification of the individual/group + the Core Value observed + the specific behavior. For example: *"I am giving a compliment to the 2nd grade for Respect because you walked calmly and used quiet voices in the hallway"*. Staff are also encouraged to identify the emotions associated with the behavior to help students connect their actions to positive feelings.

Three Levels of Recognition

1. **Individual Level:** Students are recognized for personal growth. These compliments are shared with classroom teachers and can be celebrated with a positive email or note home.
2. **Classroom Level:** Each teacher maintains a system (such as pom-poms or house points) to convert earned compliments into classroom-based rewards.
3. **School-wide (Spot of the Month):** Each month, the leadership team identifies a specific "Spot" or routine (e.g., the cafeteria, hallways, or bus lines) for focused observation. If students meet the expectations outlined in the setting's specific rubric, they earn a **School Compliment**.

Whole-School Rewards

School-wide compliments accumulate toward collective targets on a prominent bulletin board so students can see their positive behavior leading to positive experiences.

Teaching and Community Events

Expectations are taught through explicit instruction, including role-playing, storytelling, and visual aids. These lessons are reinforced through high-engagement school-wide events. Examples include:

- **The Great Door Decor Challenge:** A collaborative project focused on Perseverance.
- **Board Game Bonanza:** A day of supported board game play to practice Respect.
- **Read Across Lilja:** A "Drop Everything and Read" event in pajamas to celebrate Inclusivity.
- **Planet Protectors:** Environmental stewardship activities centered on Dependability.
- **Field Day:** Our hallmark event for practicing Empathy and sportsmanship.

Interventions and Equity

When behavioral challenges arise, Lilja uses a Restorative Practice model. This approach shifts the focus from punishment to repairing harm and restoring relationships, ensuring that every student remains a valued member of the community. We are committed to equity, providing inclusive expectations and ensuring all PBIS communications are accessible to our diverse family populations through multiple languages and formats.

Home Connection

We encourage families to use the language of our Core Values at home to create a consistent support system. Families can participate by engaging with the "Home Connection" section of our newsletters, which includes discussion prompts and age-appropriate chores, such as sorting recycling for dependability, that mirror school-based goals.

School Traditions

At Lilja, traditions and school events play an important role in building a strong sense of belonging, connection, and community. Throughout the year, students, staff, and families come together to celebrate learning, recognize student growth, strengthen relationships, and create lasting memories.

These shared experiences bring Lilja's core values of Perseverance, Respect, Inclusivity, Dependability, and Empathy to life. They provide opportunities for students to celebrate one another, contribute to our school community, and feel valued as an important part of the Lilja Lion family.

From annual traditions to school-wide celebrations and family events, these experiences help create a welcoming environment where every student feels connected, supported, and proud to be part of Lilja Elementary School.

Traditions include:

School-Wide Celebrations

Students come together throughout the year for school-wide events that celebrate accomplishments, reinforce our shared values, and build a sense of belonging. These celebrations highlight students who demonstrate Lilja's core values and recognize the many ways students contribute positively to our community.

Cultural Arts Experiences

Through the support of our Cultural Arts program and PTO, students participate in engaging experiences that bring learning to life. These experiences may include visiting artists, authors, performers, cultural presentations, and grade-level programs connected to classroom learning.

Seasonal and Family Events

Throughout the year, the Lilja community gathers for events that strengthen family connections and celebrate our shared community. These may include family gatherings, service opportunities, appreciation events, and other PTO-sponsored activities.

Lilja Carnival

The annual Lilja Carnival is a beloved PTO run community tradition that brings together students, families, staff, and community members for an afternoon of fun and connection. The event includes games, activities, entertainment, food, and opportunities for families to celebrate together.

4th Grade Clap Out

The Fourth Grade Clap Out is a special Lilja Elementary School tradition that celebrates our fourth-grade students as they prepare to move on to the next chapter of their educational journey. This joyful school-wide event recognizes the growth, accomplishments, friendships, and memories students have built throughout their elementary school years.

During the Clap Out, fourth graders walk through the halls of Lilja one final time as elementary students while teachers, staff, and younger students line the walkways to cheer them on with applause, encouraging words, and celebration. It is a meaningful opportunity for the entire school community to come together to honor our students and recognize how much they have grown as learners, leaders, and members of the Lilja community.

The Clap Out represents the strong connections built among students, families, educators, and staff throughout the elementary experience. It is a celebration of perseverance, kindness, accomplishments, and the many contributions our fourth graders have made to Lilja Elementary School.

Lilja Senior Alumni Clap Out

The Lilja Senior Alumni Clap Out is a beloved Lilja Elementary School tradition that celebrates former Lilja students as they prepare to graduate from high school and begin the next chapter of their lives. This special event brings alumni back to the school where their educational journeys began and provides an opportunity for the Lilja community to recognize their growth, accomplishments, and continued connection to the school.

During the Senior Alumni Clap Out, graduating seniors return to Lilja wearing their caps and gowns and walk through the school as current students, teachers, and staff line the halls to celebrate them with applause and words of encouragement. The event is a joyful reminder of the lasting relationships and memories created during students' elementary years.

The tradition highlights the strong sense of community that defines Lilja Elementary School and allows younger students to see the possibilities ahead of them. It celebrates perseverance, growth, and the many paths our students take after leaving Lilja, while welcoming alumni back as valued members of the Lilja family.

Families, staff, and students look forward to this annual celebration as a meaningful way to honor our graduates and recognize that once a student is part of the Lilja community, they always remain part of it.

Please see further information here.

Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

Breakfast

Families may choose to have their students participate in breakfast at Lilja. Students should be dropped off at the cafeteria doors on Oak Street after 8:00 am. Students will be able to make a selection from the cafeteria and eat at tables while supervised by staff. Students who take the bus to school will be given the option to disembark after 8:00 am if they are planning to participate in breakfast. Students must remain in the cafeteria until arrival begins at 8:20 am.

Arrival

Arrival begins at 8:20 am. Students are expected to be in their classrooms ready to learn at 8:30 am.

All buses and transportation vans utilize the front loop on Bacon Street. No cars are permitted in this loop while buses are present, approximately 8:00- 8:45 am.

Students who walk to school are expected to enter through the front doors on Bacon Street.

Families who choose to drop off their student by car are expected to utilize the car drop off routine, outlined in the following link.

Please note that all doors will be closed and locked promptly at 8:30 am to ensure that our supervising staff can get to their assigned teaching locations at the start of instruction, and to ensure that all students are appropriately accounted for.

Dismissal

Dismissal begins at 2:56 pm. Each student will follow the dismissal plan in their Pick Up Patrol account without exception.

All buses and transportation vans utilize the front loop on Bacon Street. No cars are permitted in this loop while buses are present, approximately 2:40- 3:10 pm.

All kindergarten students who take the bus must be met at the stop by a designated adult. Any kindergarten student without an adult present at the bus stop will be brought back to Lilja and expected to be picked up by a parent/guardian.

Arrival and Dismissal Expectations for Students and Families

All families are expected to review this presentation which describes all expectations, traffic flow, and safety precautions prior to each school year. Additionally, families are expected to discuss these expectations with their students.

Staff List

Up to date staff lists can be found on the school website: [Staff list]

Principal Welcome



Dear Memorial School Families,

Welcome to Memorial School! We are excited to partner with you to make this the best school year yet for your child.

At Memorial, we strive for academic excellence while nurturing each student's unique growth. Our focus is not only on learning facts and skills but also on building strong social-emotional foundations. Your child will have many opportunities to practice being a kind friend and a thoughtful partner, because learning is social.

Our teaching approach weaves subjects together to help students build rich background knowledge and show what they've learned in meaningful ways that highlight their mastery. Together, we will support your child's journey to become a confident learner and a caring community member.

Thank you for trusting us with your child's education. We look forward to an amazing year filled with discovery, friendship, and success!

Best,

Karen Ghilani, Principal

Dear Memorial Elementary Families and Caregivers,



I am truly honored to serve as your Assistant Principal at Memorial. It's a privilege to be part of such a warm and welcoming environment, and I'm excited to contribute to the vibrant community we share.

My primary focus this year will be to cultivate a safe and inclusive atmosphere where every student feels valued and supported. I am dedicated to building strong relationships with our students, families, and staff, as I believe that collaboration is key to our success. Together, we can create an environment where all children thrive.

I am eager to witness our students' growth in various aspects throughout the school year, and I sincerely value your partnership in supporting their social, emotional, and academic success.

Here's to a wonderful school year filled with learning, growth, and meaningful connections!

Warm regards,

Pat Marra, Assistant Principal

School Mission

Memorial School is reviewing our mission and vision statements to better reflect our current hopes and dreams for our community. Our School Council is leading this important work, gathering input from families, staff, and students to create mission and vision statements that will guide us forward from 2026 and beyond.

Our current mission and vision statements are listed below. We look forward to sharing updates with you throughout the school year as this work progresses.

Mission Statement

- Memorial Elementary School believes all children can learn, and it is our responsibility to ensure students actively reach their full potential, socially and academically.
- We foster strong relationships within our community.
- We support the development of social and emotional competence.
- We hold ourselves accountable for continual growth.
- We maintain high expectations and promote academic excellence for all students.
- We utilize reflective practice and data to individualize learning experiences.

Vision Statement

Memorial Elementary School is a community of learners dedicated to developing responsible and confident leaders in society. Motivated by a high standard of excellence, we inspire each other to be compassionate citizens, critical thinkers, and lifelong learners.

Core Values

At Memorial School, our core values guide everything we do. We believe in **SPARK**—five commitments that help us build a welcoming, supportive community where every student can thrive.

SAFE: We prioritize safety and emotional well-being for everyone. Students make thoughtful choices, keep their bodies and minds calm, and use kind and respectful words in all interactions.

POSITIVE: We are a team of learners who lift each other. We encourage one another to do our best, celebrate progress, and approach challenges with a growth mindset. When things get difficult, we persist and ask for help when we need it.

ACCOUNTABLE: We take responsibility for ourselves, our classmates, and our world. Through our daily actions, we demonstrate care and commitment to our school community and environment.

RESPECTFUL: We show respect by listening to each other, valuing different perspectives, and honoring our core values throughout the school day. Respect means recognizing that everyone has something valuable to contribute.

KIND: We use kind words and actions to create a safe, inclusive space where students feel comfortable learning and taking healthy risks. We celebrate each other's unique talents and embrace our differences as strengths.

Together, these values create the foundation for a school where families, staff, and students work as partners to support every child's success.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

At Memorial School, we work together to teach the positive behaviors we expect from students and staff. When expectations are clear, everyone is better able to meet them.

Teaching Expectations
Each year begins with designated lessons on our five SPARK agreements in common spaces throughout the school: hallways, cafeteria, bathrooms, buses, and recess. This Tier 1 approach builds a shared vision for how we support one another at school. When students

need additional practice internalizing these agreements, we provide small-group lessons to reinforce their success.

Once expectations are taught, we celebrate student success in several ways:

Stickers: Students may earn a sticker from an adult or Safety Patrol member for being a positive role model and demonstrating SPARK core values. When students receive a sticker, they learn why they earned it. Adults may ask them about their stickers, reinforcing positive behavior in a simple yet effective way across all settings.

Tickets: Adults and students can complete a SPARK ticket and deposit it in the SPARK box in the front office. Each week, five tickets are randomly drawn and read during announcements. Recognized students are invited to the office for a photo, receive a Mustangs pin, and are featured on our SPARK bulletin board.

Shout-Outs: We host monthly whole-school assemblies, each focusing on one of our core values. During assemblies, staff and faculty recognize groups of students who have been positive role models, shown effort in their learning, taken risks, or demonstrated growth. Shout-outs allow the entire school community to hear and celebrate each other's successes.

Building Community
As members of a community focused on growth and effort, we are committed to setting clear expectations and celebrating success along the way.

Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

Student Arrival at Memorial:



There is a **new traffic pattern** during arrival and dismissal at Memorial this year. The road that circles the building is now **ONE WAY between the hours of 8:15 - 9:00 am and 3:00 - 3:30 pm.** This means that all cars parked along the tennis courts or back of the building **MUST** exit around the building during these hours.

Student Safety is our utmost concern, so please familiarize yourself with and adhere to the following routines and state laws. Note that we are responsible for over 440 children arriving safely in sun, rain, or snow amidst 10 buses, many cars, drivers who are often anxious to get to work, and staff with specific responsibilities. Please refrain from using cell phones at this time and attend cautiously to the drop-off and pick-up routines. Everyone's cooperation is essential and expected to ensure a safe, calm arrival every day.

Arrival begins at 8:40 am. Students are greeted by staff and enter through the main doors. Instruction starts promptly at 8:50. Please help your students get to school on time to allow them ample opportunity to greet their teachers and peers, store their belongings, and prepare for the start of their day.

By Bus – Buses drop off students in the front lane designated for buses only. Staff is on duty at 8:40 am to ensure a safe transition into school.

By Car - Arrival is between 8:40-8:50. Parents should drive around the building and queue in the drop-off circle. Please adhere to the 15 MPH school zone speed limit when traveling around the building. Faculty and Safety Patrol will help to open and close doors upon arrival. Please have students ready to exit vehicles (unbuckled with backpacks) to keep the line moving. Drivers are not allowed to exit their vehicles into the circle traffic. Please practice getting ready to exit your car at home. It makes for a safer and more efficient process. There is no drop-off allowed before 8:40 or after 8:50 am. There is no supervision outside, and the school cannot be responsible for students' safety. Parents delivering children after 8:50 am when no staff are on duty, **MUST** park in the lot and escort their child into the building and sign them in. Children arriving after 8:50 will be marked as tardy. Never drop your child off unsupervised.

By Bicycle - Students in 3rd and 4th grade are allowed to bike alone with written parent permission. All other students must be accompanied by a parent since there is no crossing guard at Eliot Street. Bicycles should be stored and locked in the school bike racks.

Important safety reminders:

- *Children must NEVER be left off unsupervised.*
- *The circle around the building is now **ONE WAY during arrival and dismissal.***

- *The circle is a FIRELANE; therefore, parking in the CIRCLE is prohibited and illegal.*
- *State law PROHIBITS a motor vehicle from passing a school bus with flashing lights while children are boarding or exiting.*

Student Dismissal at Memorial School

Bus Dismissal

- Students riding buses will wait in their classrooms for their bus to be called. They will then head to the lobby where staff will check in students and escort them outside to board the bus.
- Buses will pull into the circle for students to load.

Walkers

- All walkers will exit Door #20 (off the main lobby) onto the hard top/edge of the field.
- Staff will dismiss students to adults per PickUp Patrol.
- 4th graders can be independent walkers once parent permission is given to the school in writing.
- **Walkers are encouraged to move from this space to avoid car line pickup. All cars will exit via the fire lane during dismissal.**
- **If students are walkers, they are expected to walk off school grounds to go home.**

Car Line Pick Up Process

- All students being picked up by car will line up in the gymnasium by grade level.
- Cars pull around the back of the building.
    - Cars will line up at the gym door (behind the orange cones).
    - Be sure to put the car in PARK.
        - Do not leave your car idling before 3:16 pm.
    - **All cars must display an official identification on the passenger-side window (student's last name and class):**
        - **One sheet per family will be printed out at school and sent home. Please cut the car identification in half.**
        - More may be provided by contacting the front office.
- Staff at the door will double-check the car identification and release student(s).
- Parents remain in the vehicle, and students should enter the vehicle from the passenger side only.

- If you are ready to leave before the cars ahead of you, you must wait. **DO NOT** pass cars in line.
- Cars will exit Memorial by driving slowly around the building, ensuring to stop at the stop sign at the crosswalk. Walkers and buses will have the right of way.
- All cars that drive onto school grounds for pick-up must follow the pick-up process

Dismissal Process Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What time can cars begin to line up?
Cars may begin lining up to pick up students after 2:30 pm, but students will not be released to families before 3:16 pm.

What happens if I am running late?
If you are late and the door to the gym is closed when you pull up, drive around the building to visitor parking and then enter the building through the front doors to pick up your child(ren) from the office. If you are running late, PLEASE call (508) 647- 6590 to notify the office so we can let the dismissal staff know, and we will keep them safe until you arrive.

Should families keep cars running?
Do not leave your car idling before 3:16. Natick Public Schools follow state law (Massachusetts General Law Chapter 90, Section 16B and 540 CMR 27.00), which strictly prohibits unnecessary motor vehicle idling on school grounds. Drivers dropping off or picking up students must turn off their engines while waiting.

What if I forget my personal car identification?
Let the office know in advance if you do not have your personal car identification, and they will let the staff on duty know.

What if I need to check the lost and found or see the school nurse?
If you need to enter the school, pick up your child(ren) and park in visitor parking out front. Then, enter the school building through the front doors and sign in at the main office.

What if I want to go to the playground after school?
All cars that drive onto school grounds for pick-up must follow the pick-up process. After picking up your child(ren), you should proceed to the visitor parking lot, park, and walk safely to the playground. The playground closes at 3:45 and stays closed until 5:30 for the ASAP program to use.

Where do I enter the visitor parking lot?
The visitor parking lot has only one entrance. Cars will have to pull around the school, drive back to Joseph E. Ailinger Drive, and then take a left into the visitor parking lot from Joseph E. Ailinger Drive.

What if a student is not ready when their car approaches?

The car will be asked to pull forward and park in the open spot on the left so we do not hold up the line.

Bicycles
Students are invited to ride their bikes to school with parent permission. Parents need to note the dismissal plan as Walker in Pick Up Patrol and in the notes section indicate bike rider. Students should wear a helmet.

After School Programs
Children who attend after school programs (ASAP, Tobin, YMCA, etc.) are dismissed to specific areas of the building where program staff meet them and take attendance.

Changes in Regular Dismissal for Students

Natick Public Schools elementary schools use **PickUp Patrol** for managing all dismissal plans and dismissal plan changes. **(Changes in dismissal plans can not be accepted after 1:30 00 p.m. to ensure the safety of all students.)**

Please log in to PickUp Patrol each day that you will be dismissing your student before the regular school dismissal time or if your student's normal after-school routine will change that day. You also have the option to enter dismissal changes for future dates. For safety reasons, the school cannot dismiss a child to anyone other than a parent or a specifically authorized adult. We appreciate your cooperation with this practice.

All NPS elementary school families use a system called PickUp Patrol to help us track dismissals. PickUp Patrol (PUP) provides families with a convenient way to make changes to your children's dismissal plans. Most importantly, it will help us ensure that our students are safely dismissed to their correct after-school destinations.

Use the PUP web app for:

ATTENDANCE: Notify the school office when your child will be absent, arriving late or leaving early.

DISMISSAL CHANGES: Submit changes to your child's regular dismissal plans. For example:

- *A student normally rides the bus, but is getting picked up today.*
- *A student usually goes to aftercare, but is leaving early for an appointment.*

How it works:

Parents/Guardians assign their child(ren) a dismissal plan at the start of the year. This is the plan they will regularly follow on normal days. We call this the Default Plan, and it can be customized by each day of the week.

Whenever you have a change to the Default Plan, you'll submit a change through the PUP app. When the plan is submitted, the school will be notified, and your child's teacher will relay the change to them.

All plan changes should be entered in Pick-Up Patrol. Notes, emails, or phone calls will not be accepted for changes, except in emergencies.

Getting started with PUP:

1. **REGISTER:** You will receive a registration email from Pick-Up Patrol with a link to set up your account. The PUP web app is free to parents, and you can use it from your smartphone or computer. PUP is not accessed through the app stores. Instead, for easy access, follow the instructions in your registration email for how to add it to your phone's home screen.

2. **ENTER DEFAULT PLANS:** Once you register, log into your Pick-Up Patrol account to create your child's default dismissal plan. **It's important that you complete this step so that we can safely and accurately dismiss your children.**

Thank you for using PUP to make safety a priority and to ensure our dismissal process is efficient for all our students.

If you have any questions, please first check the PUP FAQ page. If you still need help, contact us in the main office or Pick-Up Patrol at support@pickuppatrol.net.

Pick-Up Patrol is:

- **Convenient**: Make changes days, weeks, or months in advance.
- **Automated**: Reduces classroom interruptions and accurately tracks who's going where.
- **Safe and Secure**: All student information is secure, and the program is entirely administered by our own school staff.

Staff List

Classroom Teachers

Grade	Teacher	Role / Department	Staff Member(s)
Kindergarten	Ms. Kimberly Araujo	**Art**	Ms. Olivia Obrebski
Kindergarten	Mrs. Maria Sugrue	**Library**	Ms. Erin Weinman
Kindergarten	Mr. Matthew Connor	**Music**	Mr. Thomas Rice
Kindergarten	Mrs. (Alexandra) Sacha Loer	**Physical Education (PE)**	• Ms. Jenney Pascarelli • Mrs. Laura Pestana
Grade 1	Mrs. Keri Esposito	**Literacy Coach**	• Mrs. Elizabeth Brothers • Mrs. Kim Shmidt
Grade 1	Mrs. Julie Palterman	**Math Coach**	Ms. Kelsi Hawkes
Grade 1	Mrs. Kimberlee Bopp	**Role / Department**	**Staff Member(s)**
Grade 1	Ms. Alyssa Sinel	**Special Ed Administrator**	Mrs. Lisa Cyr
Grade 2	Mrs. Kelsey Crowther	**BCBA**	Ms. Carrie Carroll
Grade 2	Ms. Shannen Kelley	**Counselors**	• Mrs. Kenidi Barry • Ms. Katie Anderson
Grade 2	Mrs. Christina Ingham	**Mental Health Clinician**	Ms. Kait Nagle
Grade 2	Ms. Sara Monaghan	**Occupational Therapist (O.T.)**	Ms. Jessica Treadwell
Grade 3	Ms. Emily Davies	**Physical Therapist (P.T.)**	Mr. Brandon Westfield
Grade 3	Mrs. Elizabeth Kenney	**Psychologist**	Ms. Emma Corcoran
Grade 3	Mrs. Kim Marzullo	**Speech/Language**	Ms. Yobella Cook
Grade 3	Mrs. Kendra Weiler	**Learning Centers**	• Ms. Carolyn Bell • Ms. Jennifer St. Germain

Grade	Teacher	Role / Department	Staff Member(s)
			• Mr. (William) Bill Wager
Grade 4	Mr. (John) Jack Barter	**TLC Learning Center**	Ms. Carey Meen
Grade 4	Ms. Shannon Foley	**Category**	**Staff Member(s)**
Grade 4	Mr. Jefferson Wood	**Interventionists**	• Mrs. Deb DeHart • Mrs. April DiBartola • Mrs. Michaela Hava • Mrs. Ellen Irwin • Ms. Kathy Schnair • Ms. Colleen Hadfield • Mrs. Maureen Kaplan
Grade 4	Ms. Nicole Wassil	**Para Professionals**	• Ms. Cristin Allen • Ms. Tristen Healey • Ms. Kayleigh MacGowan • Ms. Theresa Swindlehurst • Mrs. Kristine Weddle • Mrs. Jean Whitney
Role / Department	**Staff Member(s)**	**Role / Department**	**Staff Member(s)**
Principal	Ms. Karen Ghilani	**Custodians**	• Mr. Brian Macleod • Mr. Kimesh Acharya • Mr. John McDonough
Assistant Principal	Mr. Patrick Marra	**Kitchen**	Ms. Jodi Collins
Administrative Assistants	• Mrs. Maura Flynn • Mrs. Diane Howard	**Lunch Monitors**	Mrs. Kim Arno
Nurse	• Mrs. Michelle LeBlanc • Ms. Kayla Almstrom	**Building Substitutes**	Ms. Aeisha Gamboa