

MATTHEW PATERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Making Possible Everyone's Success

FAMILY HANDBOOK 2017-18

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Mr. Joseph Keenan



**Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Andy Irvin**

**Assistant Superintendent for Instructional & Personnel
Mrs. Janet Warden**

**Assistant Superintendent for Business
Mr. Eric Stark**

**Director of Pupil Services
Mr. Joseph Simoni**

**Principal
Mr. Joseph Keenan**

**MPES PTO President
Mrs. Alison Hooten**

A Message from the Principal



Dear Members of the Matthew Paterson Learning Community,

Whether you are new to our school or have been a part of the Matthew Paterson family, the staff and I are looking forward to working with you to make this an inspiring and productive year of learning and personal growth. As a school community this year, we will continue to incorporate the “Habits of Mind” approach, which emphasizes sixteen important character traits, including: Persisting, Listening with Understanding and Empathy, Questioning and Problem Solving, Creating, Imagining and Innovating, Taking Responsible Risks, Thinking Flexibly and Interdependently, Striving for Accuracy and yes, Finding Humor. I would encourage you to be an active partner with us in establishing positive habits, whether you choose to join our school PTO board, volunteer in a classroom or take part in special events, we welcome your involvement.

As you may know, the CCSD is engaged in a multi-year Strategic Planning process involving stakeholders throughout the district to set out vision, mission and core values statements. As part of this ongoing process teams have also identified goals, along with action and assessment teams to help us focus on a continuous improvement plan for our schools and the communities we serve. Please visit the district website for further information on this process. Our commitment remains to instill a love of learning so that each student aspires to set, achieve and master important social and academic goals in the process of becoming lifelong learners. We look forward to working with you as partners to provide a safe, supportive, and challenging learning environment for all of our students.

The **Family Handbook** has been developed to help you and your child understand the behavioral and instructional expectations at MPES. As mandated by the Dignity for All Students Act, please read this handbook with your child/children. **It is important that you sign and return page 2 of this handbook to the school.** Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Mr. Joseph Keenan

Principal, MPES

Students and Parents at Matthew Paterson Elementary School

As required by the Dignity for All Students Act, please sign this form, indicating that you and your child have read the Family Handbook and that your child understands the expectations, guidelines and rules within the handbook.

Please return this page signed with both signatures to your homeroom teacher ASAP. Your signature demonstrates that you are a strong supporter of the educational process and learning.

Sincerely,

The Matthew Paterson Elementary School
Staff

Family member signature _____ Date _____

Student's signature _____ Date _____

Classroom teacher _____



MPES serves children grades Kindergarten through grade 4 with approximately 550 students. Our school has 31 classrooms, a library, gymnasium, cafeteria, computer lab, and multiple outside play areas.

CONTACTING SCHOOL

Matthew Paterson Elementary School believes in and supports positive, purposeful and meaningful communication between the school and home.

***Close communication between school and home is important.
Do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher if you have a question or concern
The school phone number (845) 878-3211***

Parents will not need to call in on the day of a student absence

All absences will generate a call home to the parent/guardian

- Students will be expected to return to school with a note explaining the absence

All staff members have e-mail which follows the **first initial and seven letters of the last name** initiallastname@carmelschols.org. ie John Sullivan jsulliva@carmelschools.org

***The school fax number (845) 878-3964
The district phone number (845) 878-2094
The district website is www.carmelschools.org***

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- The Principal's e-mail address is jkeenan@carmelschools.org
- The School newsletter will come out bi-monthly.
- CCSD website, www.carmelschools.org
- Teachers send communication to families about important classroom events.
- Information appears on the local cable channel.
- Meetings sponsored by the MPESPTO, our parent organization, provide a forum for important information about the schools.
- Please check your child's book bag for important notices.

HEALTH & Medicine

Medication Policy

Students are not allowed to carry prescription or over-the-counter medications (including cold medications, aspirin, etc.) while in school or on the school bus. In the event that your child should need medication during the school day, please follow these guidelines.

1. A parent should deliver the medication directly to the school nurse.
2. The nurse must have written instructions from the child's doctor for both prescription and over-the-counter medications which indicates the reason, the frequency and dosage to be dispensed.
3. The nurse must also have written permission from the parent to dispense the medication as prescribed by the physician.
4. Prescription medications must be in the original container and should include the student's name, name of the medication, dosage and frequency. Please ask your pharmacist to dispense the medication in two containers – one for school and one for home.
5. A parent should contact their child's teacher about how medication will be administered on a class trip.

Health Issues

Immunizations: NYS law requires that all students be immunized against polio, diphtheria, measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B and 1 dose of Vericell and/or a Dr.'s diagnosis before entering school. Varicella is for students born on or before 1998. Exemptions from this regulation require specific medical or religious certification. If you have questions, the school nurse is available to assist you.

Emergency Health Cards: These are extremely important should we need to contact you in case of an emergency. If any changes in emergency contacts or phone numbers should occur during the school year, please notify the school nurse and the Main Office.

Physical Examinations & Health Screening: All new students and those in Kindergarten, Grades 1 and 3 are required by state law to have a physical examination. It is recommended that you have this completed by your family physician. If a student has not had a documented physical, the school physician will conduct physicals in the health office. All students are checked annually for height, weight, vision and hearing. At some time during their elementary years, students are screened for color perception and farsightedness. They are also examined for scoliosis after age nine.

Communicable Disease Control: Always notify the school nurse if your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease. Once alerted to communicable disease, the nurse works to prevent the spread. From time to time, notices will be sent home with students alerting parents of specific health problems. Please take the time to read these notices and follow any directions that relate to your child.

Doctor's Notes: A Doctor's note is required if a student is not able to participate in physical education or recess. The note should include the reason and length of time the student is to be restricted.

RESPECTFUL TIMING

To provide students with an excellent learning experience, teachers spend many hours working outside of actual instructional time. Before school and during their planning time, teachers are often working to prepare for the next lesson. While teachers are happy to talk with parents, if you want to discuss your child's progress, please make an appointment rather than just dropping by. This allows the teacher to give you the attention you deserve. It also ensures that students have the complete attention of their teachers. Please do not drop by during teaching time and expect to have a conversation. While it may only be a few minutes, it takes the teacher away from the important job of teaching.

Fall Open House – September

This is an informative evening scheduled early within the first weeks of school. It is planned for parents and guardians only. This is an opportunity to meet teachers, learn about the curriculum, and obtain information about the different organizations at our school.

Matthew Paterson Elementary Student Rights and Responsibilities

The Carmel Central School District Board of Education has adopted a Code of Conduct for the entire district that can be obtained at the main office. The expectations for conduct are based on the principles of civility, citizenship, honesty, integrity and mutual respect.

At Matthew Paterson Elementary School Our students are expected to exhibit a commitment to learning and to achieving success. We believe that every child has the right to learn without fear in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Students are expected to behave in a manner that reflects respect for teachers, other adults and their fellow students. Although behavior expectations will vary with time, location, and situation, the following three general expectations will always apply:

- ✓ Keep Your Hands, Feet, and Other Objects to Yourself
- ✓ Be on Task
- ✓ Show Respect

These three things will be expected at all times and will be instrumental in achieving MPES's goals of safety and student learning.

Every student is expected to be responsible for his/her own behavior, to exercise self-discipline, and to refrain from behavior which interferes with other students' right to learn or endangers the health or well-being of others. With respect to resolving conflicts, students are taught to use positive problem solving strategies We have guidelines for appropriate student behavior that reflect the school's philosophy of respect for self and others. These responsibilities apply not only to their academics, but also to their use and care of school facilities, equipment, textbooks and supplies, creating a climate that promotes challenging-learning opportunities and good citizenship. At MPES these concepts are translated into the following rights and responsibilities:

Student Rights:

- ✓ All students have the right to be proud of whom they are.
- ✓ All students have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- ✓ All students have the right to learn without disturbance or distraction.
- ✓ All students have the right to be free from teasing, harassment or verbal abuse.
All students have a right to learn and work in a school climate that has rigorous academic standards.
- ✓ All students have the right to be informed of school rules and to have such rules and conditions available for review.

Student Responsibilities: Students should be familiar with and abide by all District policies, rules and regulations dealing with student conduct. Please take time to discuss should discuss the following student responsibilities with your child to reinforce the student's understanding and encourage his/her ability to follow of responsible conduct.

Students have the responsibility to:

- ✓ Be in school and in class on time.
- ✓ Show respect to other persons and to school property and the property of others.
- ✓ Contribute to a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning.
- ✓ Strive and work to the best of their ability.
- ✓ Demonstrate respect and tolerance towards diversity.
- ✓ Ask questions when they do not understand and seek assistance to resolve difficulties.
- ✓ Respond to other persons appropriately and to develop adaptive strategies to control their emotions.
- ✓ Think before acting by considering the impact that one's actions have on self and others.
- ✓ Seek help in solving problems.
- ✓ Make positive choices and accept the consequences of their actions.

CONSEQUENCES for unacceptable actions may vary depending on the severity of the behavior. Generally, there is a hierarchy of consequences, which includes but is not limited to the following:

1. Redirection to appropriate and/or expected behavior.
2. Verbal warning.
3. After steps #1 and 2, teachers will follow progressive discipline procedures outlined in classroom rules for infractions.

Unsafe behavior warrants immediate referral to the principal.

4. The range of disciplinary action for infractions may include:

- ✓ A phone call to the parent/guardian.
- ✓ Parent conference.
- ✓ Loss of privileges such as recess and eating in the cafeteria.
- ✓ "Cooling off" time.
- ✓ In-school suspension.
- ✓ Out of school suspension.
- ✓ Recommendation for school support services based upon agreement between the school and family.
- ✓ Referral to out of school agencies.

In the following areas of communication, bus behavior, playground behavior, and cafeteria behavior students are expected to demonstrate responsible behaviors at MPES by:

COMMUNICATION:

- ✓ Utilizing a courteous vocabulary that includes saying please, thank you and excuse me.
- ✓ Listening and thinking about what is being said and/or taught. Listening includes looking at the speaker.
- ✓ Asking questions when instruction or directions are not understood.
- ✓ Listening and following directions the **first** time they are given.
- ✓ Using language and gestures that are appropriate
- ✓ Learning to disagree in a controlled manner.
- ✓ Adhering to all school rules and expectations when attending school sponsored extracurricular events.

UNACCEPTABLE COMMUNICATION INCLUDES:

- ✓ Using profane, discriminatory and/or abusive language or gestures.
- ✓ Committing an act of violence such as hitting, punching, kicking and scratching.
- ✓ Threatening others with harm and/or with using a weapon.
- ✓ Committing acts of destruction that may include using flammable objects or using objects that are not harmful in a destructive manner.
- ✓ Being untruthful and lying, this includes making false statements about another person.



BUS BEHAVIOR:

- ✓ Walk to the bus in a single line and boarding in a safe and careful manner.
- ✓ **Move over to let another student sit down when space is available**
- ✓ Find an open seat and using the restraint buckle if one is available.
- ✓ Place book bag on the floor.
- ✓ Use a quiet, calm, indoor voice and speak only with those who are seated nearby.
- ✓ **Remain in seat for the entire bus ride to and from school.**
- ✓ Walk off the bus in an orderly manner.
- ✓ Walk in front of the bus where the bus driver can see the student if one needs to cross the street.

UNACCEPTABLE BUS BEHAVIOR:

- ✓ Distracting the bus driver.
- ✓ Running to and from the bus.
- ✓ Pushing others and cutting the bus line.
- ✓ Shouting, yelling, and using inappropriate or foul language.
- ✓ Eating food, drinking and chewing gum.
- ✓ Pushing others from a seat or demanding that they move to another seat.
- ✓ Hitting others with one's book bag or using the book bag in an obtrusive manner.
- ✓ Fighting on the bus.
- ✓ Playing with the windows, emergency levers or any safety equipment.
- ✓ Hitting children with seat belts.
- ✓ Throwing objects.
- ✓ Tripping others.
- ✓ Changing seats while the bus is in motion or being out of one's seat.
- ✓ Opening windows without permission.
- ✓ Refusing to sit in a seat assigned by the driver.
- ✓ Tampering with emergency equipment and exits.
- ✓ Possessing weapons and/or dangerous objects.
- ✓ Carrying or igniting flammable items such as matches or lighters.

Consequences for inappropriate bus behavior:

- ✓ Drivers will follow progressive discipline procedures, beginning with a verbal warning.
- ✓ The bus driver will complete a bus incident conduct report form and forward it to the principal.
- ✓ The principal or designee will speak with the student(s) involved.
- ✓ A copy of the referral will be sent home to the parent/guardian and to the classroom teacher.
- ✓ A third bus referral will result in a call home from the principal.
- ✓ The range of disciplinary actions for bus conduct infractions may include:
 - ✓ Special seating.
 - ✓ Suspension from bus privileges.
 - ✓ Parent/guardian conference.
- ✓ Replacing or repairing the item or providing school services for the bus damage will be determined by the principal and family.



PLAYGROUND BEHAVIOR:

- ✓ Listening respectfully to the directions of the adults in charge.
- ✓ Playing fairly during recess time.
- ✓ Being courteous and acting safely with classmates.
- ✓ Being a good sport.
- ✓ Treating everyone the way one wants to be treated.
- ✓ Helping others to enjoy themselves and inviting children to play.
- ✓ Lining up quietly and walking to and from the playground.
- ✓ Utilizing appropriate space boundaries.

UNACCEPTABLE PLAYGROUND BEHAVIORS:

- ✓ Pushing, shoving, or placing your hands or feet on another person.
- ✓ Throwing rocks, stones or objects or aiming any objects at another person.
- ✓ Teasing, name calling, cursing, or using abusive language.
- ✓ Fighting, kicking, hitting or using physical violence.
- ✓ Speaking disrespectfully or not listening to adults in charge.
- ✓ "Cutting" in games and during line up time.
- ✓ Playing aggressively in a way that is harmful to yourself or others.

Consequences for playground infractions:

- ✓ Verbal warning.
- ✓ Alerting teachers to the infraction.
- ✓ Parent phone call by the teacher.
- ✓ Alert the principal.
- ✓ Phone call to the family from the principal.
- ✓ Unable to participate in recess
- ✓ Suspension of recess privileges.
- ✓ In-school suspension.
- ✓ Out of school suspension.
- ✓ Denial of the privilege to participate in activity where the infraction took place.



CAFETERIA BEHAVIOR:

Lunch time is a time when courtesy and consideration become especially important.

- ✓ Walk when entering the cafeteria and be seated in a calm manner.
- ✓ Bring your lunch or lunch money with you when leaving the classroom.
- ✓ Line up quietly when purchasing lunch or snack.
- ✓ Remain in the cafeteria and do not leave your seat or the lunchroom without permission.
- ✓ Use a calm “indoor voice” during for the entire time you are in the cafeteria.
- ✓ Ask permission from a monitor to use the bathroom, or to leave the cafeteria for any purpose.
- ✓ Wait for your teacher to pick you up from the cafeteria if you need to return to class.
- ✓ Speak respectfully to the lunch monitors and all supervising adults.
- ✓ Clean up after yourself. Pick up and properly dispose of all uneaten food, drink containers and wrappers.

UNACCEPTABLE CAFETERIA BEHAVIOR: There is no:

- ✓ Running around in the cafeteria or hallway.
- ✓ Cutting, pushing or shoving while on any lunch line.
- ✓ Speaking loudly or yelling.
- ✓ Throwing and/or squashing food and drink items.
- ✓ Leaving food, napkins or wrapper on the table or food.
- ✓ Sharing of food.
- ✓ Borrowing or loaning of money.

Consequences for cafeteria infractions:

Progressive discipline procedures will be followed, however unsafe behavior such as hitting or threatening warrant immediate attention of the principal.

- ✓ Reports may be filled out and given to the teacher who will discuss the situation with the student during a meeting or personal conference.
- ✓ Denial of privileges such as sitting with their classmates or eating in the cafeteria.
- ✓ Phone call home.
- ✓ Lunch detention, recess detention, a cooling off time, in-school suspension, or out of school suspension.
- ✓ Subsequent infractions may require a parent/guardian to pick the student up from school on the day of the infraction.
- ✓ Students may be referred for in school support.

STUDENT DRESS CODE:

Students are expected to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Students and parents have a responsibility for acceptable student dress, appearance and cleanliness.



STUDENT DRESS EXPECTATIONS:

- ✓ Clothing should be safe, appropriate and not disrupt or interfere with the educational process.
- ✓ Dress items such as halter tops, short shorts, spaghetti straps, and shirts that bare the midriff or show undergarments are inappropriate.
- ✓ Footwear should be safe. Flip Flops and high heels are discouraged.
- ✓ Clothing should not include inappropriate words or pictures that are offensive, denigrate others, promote or endorse the use of tobacco, alcohol, illegal substances and/or illegal or violent activities.
- ✓ Wearing hats in the school building is not permitted.

Violations of the dress code will result in asking the student to modify their dress by covering or removing an offending item. The parent/guardian may be asked to bring to school a change of clothes for the student.

**OTHER CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS AND PROHIBITIONS IN ALL AREAS OF THE
SCHOOL BUILDING AND DURING SCHOOL FUNCTIONS:
(Violations may be subject to disciplinary action.)**

- ✓ Walking is expected in all areas of the school building and on school property.
- ✓ Loud and unreasonable noise is not acceptable.
- ✓ Language and gestures must not be profane, lewd, vulgar or abusive.
- ✓ Students shall comply with the directions of the principal, teachers, and other school staff.
- ✓ Engaging in violent behavior such as hitting, kicking, tripping, scratching, and/or punching is prohibited.
- ✓ Weapons are not allowed in school nor are any displays of what appears to be a weapon.
- ✓ Threatening to use a weapon to harm others is prohibited.
- ✓ Intentionally damaging or destroying property of the school or other persons is prohibited.
- ✓ Students shall not engage in conduct that endangers the safety, morals, and health or welfare of others such as lying, stealing, harassing, intimidating, discriminating or defaming others.
- ✓ Proper use of the bathrooms is expected. Dawdling in the bathroom, writing on the walls or flushing inappropriate items in the toilet is prohibited.

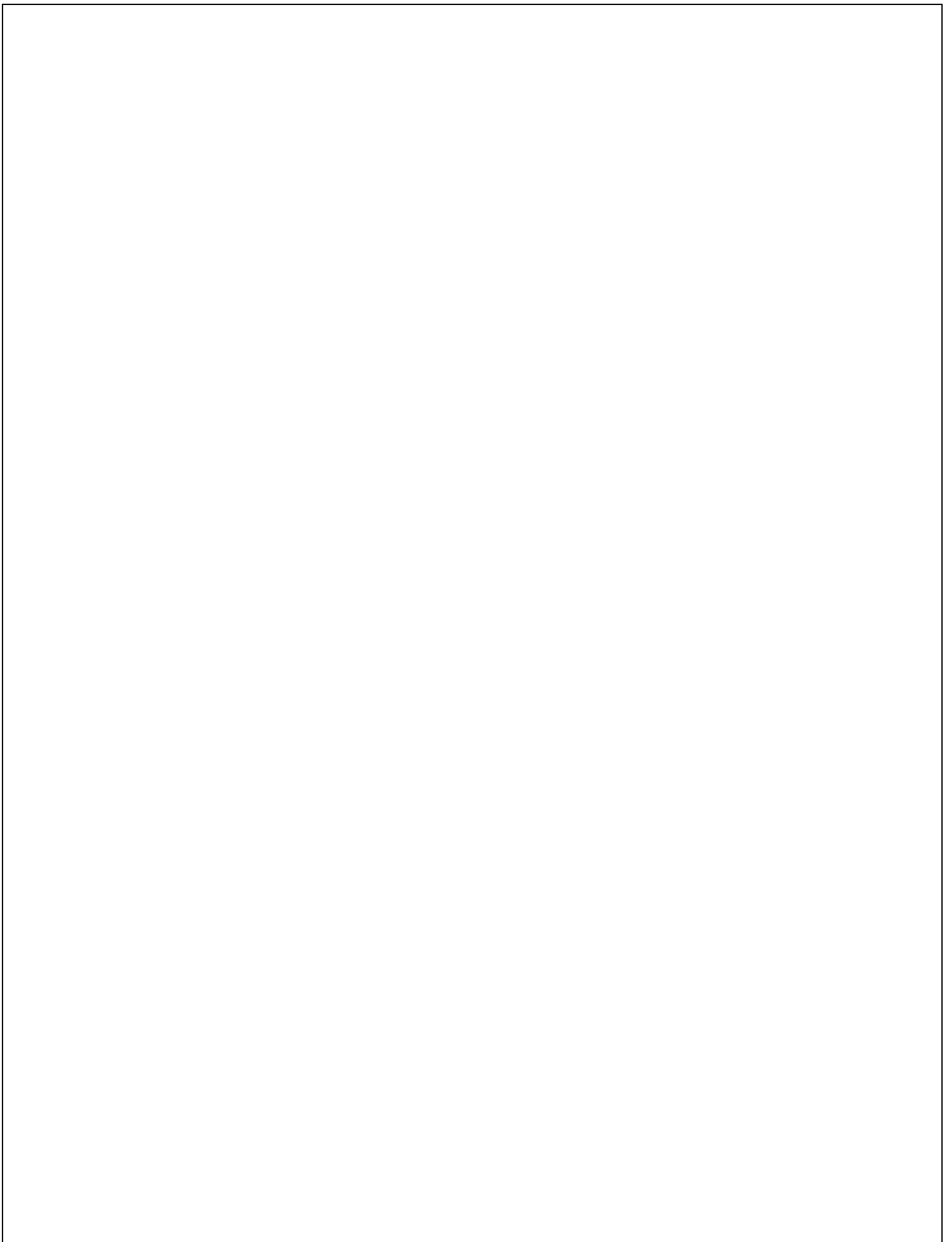
Students must abide by the Carmel Central School District Elementary Internet Policy which is sent home yearly. Students must have permission to use computers, software, and the internet/intranet account. Using inappropriate websites or any other violation of the District's acceptable use policy is subjected to disciplinary action.

Response to Hitting and Threatening:

Hitting and **threatening** are defined as physical or verbal assaults that cause harm to oneself or others. **

- ✓ Warning at the discretion of the teacher or principal.
- ✓ Individual or group conference with the teacher.
- ✓ The teacher will talk with the student. Teacher calls home.
- ✓ Lunch/recess (one day) in the cooling-off areas as per time schedule
- ✓ In the “cooling off” room the student will reflect upon the incident and compose a written response about appropriate alternative solutions. The report may need to be signed by the parent and returned to the teacher.
- ✓ Additional number of lunch/recess times spent in the “cooling off” (two to four) Support service/principal calls home. The student will compose a written report (to be sent home and signed by the parent) the report of the offense so s/he can reflect upon the problem and work toward a solution.)**
- ✓ In-school suspension (one-half to full day). The principal and teacher will conference with the children involved. A call home will be made by the principal. The student will write a report about his/her behavior and the parent will sign the report. The report will be returned to the teacher.**
- ✓ In-school suspension (two days) at the principal’s discretion. Parent conference with the teacher (if appropriate), principal (if appropriate), support personnel. Possible referral for in-school support or to an outside agency with parent approval. **
- ✓ Suspension (one day) – parent conference with teacher (if appropriate), support personnel, and principal. Possible referral to outside agencies, the Building Instructional Support Team and CSE.
- ✓ Increase suspension to two, three, four, five days at principal’s discretion. Parent conference with principal, teacher and support staff.
- ✓ Superintendent’s hearing with family, teacher, support staff and principal.

**When appropriate, conflict resolution strategies and mediation will be put into place with support staff.





Mediation: is a process where students are assisted in resolving conflicts and disagreements in a positive manner. Children are guided through a series of questions that are solution focused. Children who have a conflict and participate in mediation can expect to have an opportunity to safely discuss the problem/conflict, express their feelings and points of view and make decisions about how to avoid the conflict in the future.

Socialization Groups: These small social skills groups address specific areas of social skill development. Some students benefit from a more personalized opportunity to develop and enhance their social interaction skills.

THE SCHOOL YEAR AND THE ACADEMIC DAY

Elementary Curriculum

The elementary school program is designed to develop students' confidence in themselves as learners, to instill a love of learning and a desire to learn. The program helps students develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to communicate effectively, understand the world around them and participate fully in a democratic society.

Students will engage in integrated or thematic study that requires them to read, write, investigate, converse, design, create, analyze, share and present data and opinions as they pursue solutions and understandings.

In addition, health, safety, computer literacy, penmanship and special projects are integrated throughout the rest of the academic day in both classes and special areas.

The classroom curriculum is aligned with NYS Common Core Standards and typically includes the following:

Language Arts: involves students in extensive reading and writing activities in a workshop format designed to develop language competence and skill through literature. Students often choose their own reading materials and topics for writing. The emphasis is to encourage students to love literature and to use reading and writing effectively to express their understanding of what they have learned.

Mathematics: places an emphasis on problem-solving skills to develop understanding of math concepts and applications. Students are presented with situations or problems that require mathematical thinking. Practice arithmetic is also provided to develop computation skills. They are encouraged to think and talk about mathematical tasks and to seek multiple solutions to problems.

Science and Social Studies: programs are based on NYS curriculum standards. The curricula encourage student inquiry and uses hands-on activities to foster curiosity and a healthy skepticism. Students read widely, use a variety of resources and write often to extend their understanding and knowledge of the world around them.

Technological Literacy: is developed in the elementary school program through the introduction and use of computers and technological tools. These resources are used in the classroom, computer lab and school library program. Many students are involved in pursuing online research projects, gathering data, interviewing experts and sharing information with peers across the country.

SPECIAL AREAS

All first through fourth grade students receive instruction and participate in these special area classes:

Art	40 minutes, once a week
Music	40 minutes, once a week
Physical Education	40 minutes, twice a week
Kindergarten PE	40 minutes, once a week
Library	40 minutes, once a week
Kindergarten Library	20 minutes, once a week

Art: The art program is designed to help develop students' understanding of art through hands-on-experience with imaginary and realistic design.

Music: The music program is designed to foster students' ability to enjoy and understand music. All students in grades 1 through 4 receive general music instruction. In addition, third and fourth graders have the opportunity to learn to play recorder and grade 4 participates in chorus.

Physical Education: The physical education program includes activities in basic and creative movement, rhythm and dance, gymnastics, perceptual-motor skills and lifetime sports. Games are introduced to develop skills for individual and team sports. Students are encouraged to engage in vigorous physical activity daily at home. They must have sneakers to participate.

Library: The library program is designed to support the English Language Arts curriculum and develop research skills and a joy for reading.

ASSESSMENT/TESTING

Teachers continually assess student performance through observation, student conferences and review of each student's written work or informal assessments. Formal district-wide testing includes reading and writing inventories.

In New York State, third graders are tested in English/Language Arts (in April) and Mathematics (in April), while fourth graders are tested in English/Language Arts (in April), Mathematics (in April), and Science (in May/June). These assessments are intended to help students reach higher standards of learning and to focus on basic skills and their applications. The results of these tests are reported annually on the NYS School Report Card and individual student reports are sent home to parents.

Report card grades are determined by using a combination of assessments to ascertain if a youngster has learned. Some of the ways to know if a child is learning is by looking at the following criteria:

- ✓ New York State Tests. (Grades 3 & 4)
- ✓ Critical thinking, problem solving and collecting data.
- ✓ Expressing one's thoughts in writing.
- ✓ Students demonstrating how they arrived at a given solution(s).
- ✓ Performance tasks demonstrating an application of skills.
- ✓ Perseverance, organization, willingness to go beyond the task, and effort.
- ✓ Attendance and lateness throughout the year.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The building level **Response to Intervention Team** meets throughout the school year. RTI is a multidisciplinary team that explores and addresses specific students concerns related to academic performance; behavior, socialization, emotions, and home environment, members include a general education teacher, reading specialist, school psychologist, school social worker, special education teacher, and the referring classroom teacher. The team will support the referring teacher by assisting in developing strategies and interventions, and/or a more comprehensive plan to address the student's issues.

The purpose of RTI is to increase the utilization of strategies within the general education classroom to meet the academic and behavioral needs of individual students. At the RTI meeting intervention strategies are identified and the student's progress is monitored. If the student's needs ultimately cannot be met within the general education program, a referral for formal assessment may be warranted.

When formal assessments are recommended, a referral to the District's **Committee on Special Education** is made. Referrals are generally made through the recommendation of the **RTI Committee**. The **CSE** provides formal assessments for students who are suspected of having a disability and also determines eligibility for classification. An **Individual Educational Plan (I.E.P.)** consisting of goals and objectives is developed by the CSE to provide an appropriate education for students who are eligible for services.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

Information about school closings, delayed openings and early dismissal due to inclement weather or emergencies will be announced by several radio stations. You can also call the Information Line at 225-1637 for a recorded message about school closings. The Matthew Paterson Elementary School will also have a recorded message on voice mail apprising you of a delayed opening or closing. Automated calls will be made to each family from the District Office. The following stations will provide information about the Carmel Central School District. In the event of an unannounced school closing or evacuation, children will not be able to make phone calls. Please establish a plan for emergencies and share that plan with your child

WPUT Brewster (1510 AM)
WLNA Peekskill (1420 AM)
WMJV Patterson (105.5 FM)
WOR New York (710 AM)

WLAD Connecticut (800 AM)
WHUD Peekskill (100.7 FM)
WVIP Mt. Kisco (1310 AM and 106.3)

In the event of an emergency early dismissal, the following procedure will be followed.

- Have an emergency plan on the **same bus route**. Rehearse the plan with your child. Students will not be able to call home.
- Fill out the Emergency Form, return it to school and update the information if there are any changes by calling the main office. ***It is very important to update your information as it changes and at the beginning of each school year.*** Please remember to update phone numbers, work numbers, cell phone numbers, and numbers for neighbors/relatives in the event of an emergency
- Children will be sent home on their regular bus either to their home or to the day care provider.



We welcome families and volunteers, but to insure the safety of our children, we have instituted the following safeguards to protect our children.

- ✓ **VISITORS MUST SHOW PROPER I.D.** prior to entrance into the building and stop by the main office to alert the staff when you arrive.
- ✓ It is important to sign the registry book outside of the main office.
- ✓ All parents/visitors must sign in and wear a nametag on every school visit. The badge is to be worn on outer clothing where it may be easily seen and is to be returned to the office upon completion of visit.
- ✓ Sensitive issues will be handled at the discretion of the Principal.
- ✓ Please understand that if you are in the building without a pass and redirected to sign the registry, it is to ensure the safety of our children
- ✓ Parents should set a specific schedule with the teacher for participation and should be prepared to do specific tasks. Some training sessions, as appropriate for the activity, may be necessary.
- ✓ Parents should make every effort to make child care arrangements for younger siblings. Siblings in a classroom are a distraction for the volunteering parent and for the class. For the same reason, siblings may not accompany a chaperone on a field trip.
- ✓ For security reasons, parents may not have lunch in the cafeteria with their child's class when volunteering in school.
- ✓ Visits in special subject classes are by appointment only.
- ✓ Any volunteers who are still in the building at 3:20 p.m. must report to the cafeteria and remain there to sign their child out if they plan to take their child home. (We do recommend that all children ride the bus every day, even if a parent is volunteering in school.) In any case, please do not return to the classroom until all buses have left the grounds.
- ✓ When volunteering at school, you may not go to another classroom (i.e. sibling) to talk with the child or teacher. This is disruptive to all.

Visits to a classroom during regular school hours must have an appointment or invitation to a special event.

MPES PTO

The Matthew Paterson Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization (MPESPTO) is a non-profit entity comprised of parents and teachers of students enrolled at Matthew Paterson Elementary School. Parents become members automatically upon enrollment of their child. There are no dues or fees, and active participation is encouraged. The MPESPTO goal is to enhance the academic, social and environmental aspects of your child's educational experience here at Matthew Paterson Elementary. We accomplish this through a variety of programs and services held throughout the school year. Our website is designed to keep families informed about the many wonderful aspects of the school experience. Our email-based updates provide important dates and details about various events and services, and we encourage parents to sign up for these via our website.

Committees comprised of parents and teachers, overseen by the MPESPTO executive board, manage many of the events and programs held throughout the year. Join a committee and put your talents and skills to work for the benefit of all of our children. Previously, the PTO has sponsored book fairs, teacher and parent workshops, assemblies, adult education, school pictures; The PTO is always open to your ideas and talents and encourages your involvement. All parents are encouraged to join us for our meetings. Through your support, the MPESPTO also provides funding for teacher grants, field trip expenses, technology upgrades, playground and recess equipment, publishing supplies, Field Day, yearbook gift for each fourth grader and more.

As parents of students of Matthew Paterson Elementary School, your MPESPTO knows the value of a quality education, and we're proud to be a part of your child's experience at MPES. We urge you to reach out with questions, concerns or ideas on how, together; we can make our school even better.

Email your MPES PTO president at president@MPESpto.org or write to MPES PTO, 100 South St., Patterson, NY 12563. You can even contact us via your child's backpack by enclosing your correspondence in an envelope clearly marked MPES PTO.

Let's make it a great year!

SITE-BASED COMMITTEE

Several years ago, the Commissioner of Education of New York State asked each school to set up a management team composed of administrators, teachers, school related personnel and parents. The purpose of this team was to review opportunities for student academic and social growth and to plan for school improvements that would have a positive impact on student achievement. To this end, the MPES Site-Based Committee has actively worked to make MPES the best possible school for every child. During the past few years we have worked on reporting practices to parents, guided the development of the new narrative report card for K-4 students, school security and safety, emergency evacuation plans and homework guidelines.

The Site-Based Committee welcomes your input on topics that relate to school excellence, but ask that you see your child's teacher or Mr. Keenan to discuss any issues that specifically relate to your child.

Drop off and pick-up procedures

Our parking lot is crowded and busy, and therefore, can pose safety issues if procedures are not adhered to.

Please use extreme caution while driving in and out of our parking lot – The childrens safety depends on it!

1. Please drive slowly while in the parking lot and adhere to safety directions.
2. Please do not drop your child off at school before 9:00 A.M. because **there is no one to supervise your child.**
3. Please do not drive your car in front of the school during A.M. drop-off (not before 9:10 A.M.) and P.M. pick-up.
4. Drop children off at the crosswalk. Never walk between parked busses.
5. Please wait for the custodian to give you direction.
6. If you arrive at school and no one is outside to supervise your child, please park your car and walk your child into the school. Please do not leave your car running outside by the entranceway.
7. Please do not park in the spaces designated as **reserved** or **handicapped**.

TOYS

In an attempt to keep the focus of the school on academic issues, we ask that no personal property be brought to school. Personal property is defined as anything that is brought to school by the student that does not directly support a particular lesson or educational activity assigned by the teacher. This includes but is not limited to trading cards (i.e., "Pokemon," sports cards, etc.) gum, candy and other food (except as part of lunch or classroom snack), skateboards, skate shoes, rollerblades, electronic devices (I-Pods, I-Pads, Nintendo D.S., MP3 players, virtual pets, etc.) laser devices, pictures, posters, games, toys, and excessive amounts of money. For the safety of students, bicycles and scooters are also not permitted. Cell and smart phones, I-Pads and tablets should not be brought to school. In addition to the distraction of these items to the learning process, they can be a source of conflict between students. They can become lost or damaged as well. For the benefit of everyone, all of these items should be kept at home where they are safe and do not interfere with the school's focus. The school will not be responsible for lost, stolen or damaged personal property

PARENT CUSTODY ISSUES

If there are issues involving custody, whether legal or personal in nature, make sure the office is provided appropriate documentation. If you are not the primary residence of the child but would like copies of all school notifications, please send a letter of request to the office.

Students can only be released to authorized adult(s). This includes parents and those listed as emergency contacts. If your child is to go home with someone not listed as an emergency contact, please send a note, or contact the office to give us direction and permission. Please be prepared to show identification.

IMPORTANT: If there is a restraining order or parenting plan that is relevant to your child, we must have a copy for your child's file in order to comply.

If there is an emergency, we will only release students to people listed as emergency contacts/authorized persons, or who a parent specifically authorizes when we contact the parent.

LOST AND FOUND

Our school has a lost and found cabinet available during school hours throughout the school year. It is located in the cafeteria. Parents should be sure their children's possessions are labeled with your child's name (i.e., lunches, and clothing) to ensure proper identification. Items not claimed are given to charity at the middle and end of the year.

PRACTICE DRILLS

Matthew Paterson Elementary has a number of practice drills to insure the safety of students. The following is a list of drills that will be practiced during the school year. Families are not told when the drills occur. Be assured that teachers will help children to understand that the drills are practice and that students are not in any danger.

- ✓ Emergency evacuation
- ✓ Fire
- ✓ High wind
- ✓ Lock-down
- ✓ Sheltering
- ✓ Tornado/severe weather



Nursing Notes

Nurse's office

Our nurse is available to attend to students who become ill or who are injured while in school. Students who need to go to the nurse's office should ask their teacher or the adult in charge for permission to go to the nurse. The nurse maintains health records for all students. Parents are encouraged to contact the nurse's office to inform the school of any health problems. The school nurse works in partnership with parents, teachers and students. Injuries sometimes occur at school – The school nurse will notify you if your child is severely injured. Please keep all contact information up to date.

Food Allergy Awareness

We have several students at Matthew Paterson Elementary School with a variety of life threatening food allergies. Please remind your student the importance of not sharing food items during snack time or lunch time. We are a nut-aware school, please consider peanut and nut free snack items which will be eaten in the classrooms to help insure the safety of all students.

Medication

New York State Law governs administration of medication in schools. School personnel cannot dispense internal medication, whether prescription or over-the-counter, without both a doctor's written order and parental consent. All class trips must have parental approval and a doctor's note if administration the day of the trip is not a necessity. If medication is warranted, a parent must accompany the child. In some cases, as in the fourth grade outdoor education programs, a nurse will be provided by the district.

Students may not bring medication to school. The parent must bring the medication in the original bottle from the pharmacy with the label attached including the doctor's name, phone number and directions or orders.

The parent must apprise the school nurse of medical conditions and medication. Please do not make any assumptions that the school need not know about a problem. Your child's safety and well being are paramount in school and at home.

Scoliosis screening

New York State Law requires that each child between the ages of 8-16 be provided with Scoliosis Screening. School appointed personnel will conduct the screening. Parents will be notified prior to the event so children can be appropriately dressed for screening. Efforts are made to make the experience private and discreet.

Lice

From time to time a few homes are affected by a lice situation. Having lice is an uncomfortable condition that may feel embarrassing to the child and the family. However, having lice is not an unusual situation at school and each year a few homes are affected. Students are sent home when lice is detected. Should lice be detected in a classroom all children in that class will be checked. You will receive a call from the school nurse who will help you deal with how to help your child and what to do in your home. You will need to apply a special product to your child's hair. The nurse will ask you to check your family's hair for five days. It is important to take care of the bedding also.

Before and after school care

Camp Wilbur Herrlich and the Carmel Central School District partner to offer parents a before and after school program. These programs are offered in accordance with the state regulations and the Office of Children and Families. All programs offer sports, games, crafts, character development, theme days and special events, indoor and outdoor activities, and more. The After School Programs also offer homework time. The Camp program operates independently of the school. Please call 878-6662---for information regarding cost and registration.

Homework procedure

The Site Based Team established homework procedures for all students at Matthew Paterson Elementary School. As a learning community we believe that the purpose of homework is to:

- ✓ Build study habits.
- ✓ Increase student knowledge.
- ✓ Build better attitudes about school.
- ✓ Provide consistency between school and home.
- ✓ Reinforce what is learned in school.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for creative projects that expand student learning.

Homework will be assigned to students at Matthew Paterson Elementary School four to five days a week based upon teacher discretion. It is expected that all students will spend quality time doing homework and all homework returned to school is neat, appropriate, spelled correctly and organized.

In addition to homework, students should read a minimum of twenty minutes each day and accomplish reading at least twenty books on their own outside of assigned reading from school. Parents are encouraged to read with their children.

Guidelines for time spent on homework

Homework and classwork are different. Teachers will note on top of a student's page when the assignment is classwork to be made up or homework. Work not completed in school is expected to be completed at home in addition to homework.

How Much Time Should a Student Spend on Homework?

The following are rules-of-thumb guidelines for the amount of time homework assignments should take. Since students work at a different pace, parents should use discretion as to how much time should be allotted to an assignment. If your child consistently has a hard time finishing assignments, call or meet with her/his teacher to discuss the difficulty.

As we strive for Differentiated Instruction, all students' homework experience will be varied in content, and more uniform with respect to the time they need to invest in it. Independent reading is an important component of the complete education of every student. The following time guidelines do not include independent reading unless specifically assigned.

Kindergarten

10 minutes per night.

Grade One

Approximately 15-20 minutes per night

Grade Two

Approximately 20-30 minutes per night.

Grade Three

Approximately 30-45 minutes per night.

Grade Four

Approximately 40-60 minutes per night.

Responsibilities of the teacher

It is expected that the teacher will:

- ✓ Prepare a daily or weekly homework assignment and long-term projects with clear and explicit directions.
- ✓ Encourage children to be responsible for homework and unfinished classwork.
- ✓ Check returned homework in a timely manner.
- ✓ Follow up with children and parents if homework is not returned or needs to be completed in a different way.

Responsibilities of children

It is expected that children will:

- ✓ Follow their teacher's daily or weekly homework plan.
- ✓ Pack up homework each day.
- ✓ Complete all homework each night, carefully and neatly.
- ✓ Return the homework to school each day.
- ✓ Return weekly library books.

Responsibility of parents

It is expected that parents will:

- ✓ Encourage good work habits by providing a consistent work place and needed supplies. Check the homework assignment pad and assist children when appropriate.
- ✓ Read, listen and/or discuss the nightly independent reading assignment.
- ✓ Call the school if there are any questions or concerns about homework or classwork.
- ✓ Contact the teacher if your child is frustrated or is taking more than an hour to complete.

Consequences of not doing homework

The following consequences are implemented at the teacher's discretion:

- ✓ Teacher conference with the student.
- ✓ Send a note to the family.
- ✓ Make a phone call to the family.

Vacation time and homework

Students are encouraged to come to school daily. Absences to go on family vacations are discouraged.

Please notify your child's teacher in the event of any expected extended absence.

Absence due to illness

If a student is absent for one day, it is not necessary to make the homework up that day. The teacher will provide time to catch up

If the student is absent over an extended period of time and the absence does not warrant home instruction, please call the school in the morning and the teacher will send required homework to the main office the following day. Extended homework assignments require 24 hours notice.

Tips for parents and students – Homework help

Homework can be a tricky subject. Some children breeze through it; some children fight it. However, homework provides important independent practice and reinforcement of skills and strategies. What's the best way for you to help your child? Here are some tips:

- ✓ Establish with your child a dedicated and focused time to do homework every day.
- ✓ If it is hard for your child to sit still or concentrate for more than a short period of time, encourage him or her to walk or talk aloud when reviewing information.
- ✓ If your child cannot get started, you can assist by reviewing the assignment with him or her. Be supportive, but avoid doing the homework yourself.
- ✓ If you are unable to help your child with a difficult subject or you are unsure of what is required, ask your child to call a classmate or homework partner for clarification. Talk with your child's teacher to explain the problem and develop a resolution together. Encourage your child to participate in a "study group" with a few playmates.
- ✓ Check to see that all the homework is completed and sign if your teacher requires a signature.
- ✓ Supply study aids at home: dictionary, thesaurus, encyclopedia, computer, and show your child how to use them. Likewise, be sure you/they have a library card and show them how to use the card catalogue or computerized listings. If you are unfamiliar with technology, any librarian can help.
- ✓ If you have more than one child, encourage them to help each other. Older children can often serve as tutors to younger children and thereby reinforce their own skills.
- ✓ Have all the tools your child needs in a little basket next to the youngster so there is no need to get up and become distracted.
- ✓ Distractions are variable, encourage your child to create a climate that is most conducive to his/her learning style.

Matthew Paterson Elementary School Field Trip Procedures

We recognize that parents are an essential positive component for their child's total educational program. Parents are invited to volunteer to participate on school trips. Teachers will select parents on a rotating basis set forth by the classroom teacher. These guidelines should be followed when participating on field trips.

1. All children need a parent signed permission slip.
2. School rules and expectations are to be followed.
3. Parents are discouraged from following school buses during school trips due to the safety and security of our students.
4. Chaperones are responsible to ride the school bus and assist the teacher in overseeing students from the time they leave the building to the time they return to school. If a parent is uncomfortable on a school bus, perhaps another volunteer activity is better suited to that individual parent.
5. Parents are required to adhere to the school sign-out procedures, at the end of the field trip.
6. Smoking is not permitted during a field trip.

HATS/CAPS

Except for special designated days, it is not appropriate for students to be wearing hats/caps in school. Please help us enforce this policy.

SAFETY PLAN

We recognize the importance of protecting the health and safety of students and staff, as well as ensuring the security and safety of school property. To that end, we have developed an emergency management plan which is on file in the district office.

We also have established a building Safety Team that is responsible for the management of the safety plan.

DRUG AND SMOKE FREE ZONE

Our school is a Drug and Smoke Free Zone.

Smoking tobacco, consumption of alcoholic beverages, and illicit use of drugs and/or possession of any of these substances, is not permitted in school buildings, or on school grounds.

SUMMER READING PROGRAM

The summer reading program is for grades K-4. Children in need of extra reading and writing support may have an opportunity to participate in the reading program.

If your child is asked to participate in the program it is the responsibility of the family to bring the child daily. Excessive absence or tardiness will result in the child being discharged from the program.

The classroom teacher will contact you if your child is being considered for the program. The reading teacher will confirm acceptance in the program with a letter to your family. A meeting will take place to discuss details about the Summer Reading Program and answer your questions.

Summer Reading Assignment

Children receive a summer reading assignment in June. During the first weeks of school, children will give an oral as well as a written presentation of the assignment. All children are expected to complete the assignment.

POLICIES

The Carmel Central School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation or disability.

- American with Disabilities Act (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973)

These two laws prohibit discrimination based on disability. The types of discrimination prohibited include access to educational programs and facilities and denial of a free and appropriate education.

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Under the provisions of the Act, parents have the right to inspect, review and have copies made of their child's records. They may request changes to the records when they believe information to be inaccurate or misleading. If you would like to review documents in a student's records, please contact the main office.

No student who has a physical or mental impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activities, is discriminated against in programs or activities and is protected under this act.

- Harassment Policy
- Internet/Computer use policy

In accordance with the educational mission of the Carmel Central School District, Internet access is available to students. The Internet gives children the capability to receive and transmit text and images, communicate through e-mail, and view and create information by developing reports and presentations.

Elementary students will be supervised as they use the Internet. Nevertheless, it is impossible for us to have total control over what every student tries to access on the Internet. Students and parents are expected to sign an Internet Use Agreement form. The agreement explains the student's Internet use responsibilities.