

# **Student & Family Handbook 2016-2017**

## **BERKSHIRE HILLS REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Great Barrington Stockbridge West Stockbridge  
50 Main Street Stockbridge, MA 01262

## **MUDDY BROOK REGIONAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

318 Monument Valley Road Great Barrington, MA 01230  
413-644-2350

## **Mission Statement**

Children, as a result of their time at Muddy Brook Elementary School will:

- approach life and future challenges with joyful curiosity and the skills to succeed,
  - ask good questions, seriously consider big ideas, and effectively communicate their thinking,
  - develop knowledge of their strengths and challenges that will lead to a strong sense of self and increased confidence,
  - care for and respect themselves and each other, and, connect with their community,
  - relish learning from differences and embrace diversity.
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## **Core Values**

***Be Kind***

***Be Responsible***

***Work Hard***



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## Contact Information

### Muddy Brook:

Front Office	413-644-2350
• Secretary, Christine Kelly	<a href="mailto:christine.kelly@bhrsd.org">christine.kelly@bhrsd.org</a>
• Secretary to the Principal, Cathy Finkle	<a href="mailto:cathy.finkle@bhrsd.org">cathy.finkle@bhrsd.org</a>
Front Office Fax	413-644-2395
Food Service	413-644-2376
Massini Bus Company	413-229-7962, 413-229-8498, FAX 413-229-8286
Nurse, Rebecca Donovan	413-644-2373
PTA President, Adrienne Rynes	<a href="http://muddybrookpta.com">muddybrookpta.com</a>
Project Connection, Jack Cowles	413-644-2350 ext.1201, <a href="mailto:jack.cowles@bhrsd.org">jack.cowles@bhrsd.org</a>
Multi-Cultural Bridge	413-644-2372
Head Start	413-644-2350 ext.1356, 413-644-0005(classroom)

### District Telephone Contact Information:

Central Office	413-298-4017
Special Education/Student Services	413-298-4017 ext. 14
Monument Valley Middle School	413-644-2300
Monument Mountain High School	413-528-3346

## **Muddy Brook Communication Plan**

Muddy Brook Elementary School is committed to creating an environment that promotes family and community engagement through strong communication. We believe that good communication is essential to a strong partnership and supports learning and achievement for all.

### **School-Wide Communication**

- Muddy Brook WAAG – Week At A Glance
- School Website - [www.mymuddybrook.com](http://www.mymuddybrook.com) or [www.bhrsd.org](http://www.bhrsd.org)
- Facebook Page – “Muddy Brook Elementary”
- All School Assemblies
- School-Wide Flyers and Emails
- Automated Phone Messages
- Classroom Newsletters
- Grade-Level Events
- School work, assessments and assignments sent home
- Teacher Phone Calls and/or Emails
- September Open House
- Student Report Cards (December and June)
- October Parent/Teacher Conferences
- March Student-Led Conference

We strive to keep parents informed and to make our community aware of the many events and happenings at Muddy Brook Elementary School. We welcome feedback and suggestions.



## Communication Components

<u>FROM</u>	<u>CONTENT</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>
<b>District</b>	<b>Newsletter</b> – programmatic, building level, budget, grants, students	Approximately every 6 weeks
	<b>SchoolMessenger or AlertNow</b> – phone communication of emergency information and school closing	Ongoing
<b>Muddy Brook Elementary</b>	<b>Muddy Brook WAAG</b> – Upcoming events	Weekly
	<b>Website</b> – Community resources & partnerships, calendar events, curriculum links	Ongoing
	<b>Facebook Page</b> – Community updates	Monthly
	<b>Specialist Learning Links Newsletter</b> – One page/specialist highlighting upcoming events, learning outcomes and strategies for families to support the learning at home	Monthly
	<b>Open House</b> – Meet teachers, see classrooms, get pacing guides & information about development, make connections	September
	<b>Emails/Phone Messages</b> – Two-way conversation	Ongoing
	Administrators and teachers read and respond to email in a timely manner. Paraprofessionals working with teachers and families share daily logs with teachers who then email information home to ensure effective teaming. <b>We discourage texting between paraprofessionals and families in order to keep the main office and teachers up to date and teaming effectively with all.</b>	
Classroom Teachers	<b>All School Assemblies</b> – Student-focused	
	<b>Standard Based Report Cards</b> – standards based reporting in all content areas, including a narrative review of progress	Term 1 - December Term 2 - June
	<b>Parent/Teacher Conference</b> – goal setting and relationship building	October

	<p><b>Student-Led Conference</b> – students share portfolios and discuss goals and progress toward these goals</p> <p><b>Newsletters</b> – multi-disciplinary information highlighting past, present and future learning; connections and strategies for families to support their child; encourages family involvement</p>	<p>March</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
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<b>Mary Berle, Principal</b> <b>Nan Thompson, Assistant Principal</b>			
<b>Class/Room</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Class/Room</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
Integrated Pre K	Jill Topham	Grade Two	Kristin Finnerty
Early Kindergarten	Kaitlin Scarbro	Grade Two	Dianna Lupiani
Kindergarten	Jack Curletti	Grade Two	Elizabeth Tomich
Kindergarten	Laura Dupont	Grade Two	Abby Walto
Kindergarten	Amy Salinetti	Grade Three	Anne Flynn
Grade One	Glendon Chamberlin	Grade Three	Shannon Guerrero
Grade One	Hope Consilvio	Grade Three	Lilly Silk
Grade One	Olivia Hagen	Grade Three	Maegan Warner
Grade One	Emma Haskell	Grade Four	Jennifer Annand
		Grade Four	John Broderick
		Grade Four	Susan Ebitz
		Grade Four	Kerry Manzolini
<b>Resource/Support Staff</b>			
<b>Title</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
Special Education	Stephanie Kluka	Clinician	Colleen Meaney
Special Education - TLC	Sharon Connolly	COTA	Kimberly Cavanaugh
Special Education	Susan Teigen	Occupational Therapist	Pamela Hassett
Special Education	Leanna Pegorari	Physical Therapist	Heidi Cooper
Learning Specialist	Barbara Minkler	School Nurse	Rebecca Donovan
Learning Specialist	Carol Way	ELL Teacher	Emily Olds
Learning Specialist	Mary Auger	Speech	Kim Swarbrick
School Adjustment Counselor	Melinda Olds	Speech	Diane Viggiano
School Psychologist	Vicky Shufton	Speech	Shannon Coleman
<b>Specialist</b>			
<b>Specialty</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Specialty</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
Art	Alexandra Benton	Physical Education	Jessica Pleu
Computer Tech.	Erin Candee	Physical Education	Tina Soule
Music (2) & Strings	Juraye Moran	Library Media	Patricia Melville
Music (PK, EK, K,1,3,4) & Band	Kim Chirichella	Enrichment	Donna Astion
<b>Office/Secretarial Staff</b>			
Secretary	Christine Kelly	Secretary to the Principal	Cathy Finkle

<b>Building Support Staff/Paraprofessionals</b>			
<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Paraprofessional</b>	<b>Small Group or 1:1</b>	<b>Para/Facilitator</b>
Integrated Pre-K	Marian Hassett		
Integrated Pre-K	Jeanne Parsons	1:1	Tanya Beni
Early Kindergarten	June Powell	1:1	Cheryl Houle
Early Kindergarten	Lynn Shaw	1:1	Linda Kahlstrom
Kindergarten	Betsy Cobb	1:1	Alex MacDonald
Kindergarten	Robin DelGrande	1:1	Kim Ostellino
Kindergarten	Maureen Seward	1:1	Wendy Scott
Grade One	Maureen Brazie	1:1	Michaela Thierling
Grade One	Janice Lang	Sped	Helen Hinkley-Grady
Grade Two	Tammy Payer	TLC	Diane Netzer
Grade Three	Suzanne Wool	TLC	Ketlyn New
Grade Four	Marie Mastroni	TLC	Angela Pevzner
<b>Cafeteria/Food Service</b> Kathy Sullivan, Director			
Kathy Loring, Head Cook	Dawn Barenski	Johnnie Chisholm (substitute)	Jody Hall
<b>Custodial Staff</b>			
Marc Breault, Supervisor	Edward Shaw	Adam Morelli	Dave Collari

Staff may be reached by email by typing: [firstname.lastname@bhrsd.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@bhrsd.org)

## Muddy Brook Elementary School Information

### ADMISSION & TRANSFER OF STUDENTS

**Integrated Pre-Kindergarten:** Our Integrated Pre-Kindergarten program is for children ages 2 years 9 months to 5 years. Half of the population in this integrated program is comprised of students who have IEPs.

**Early Kindergarten:** Registration for our Early Kindergarten program is based on a lottery. Residents of Great Barrington, Housatonic, Stockbridge and West Stockbridge may apply if their child turns four on or before September 1 of the year of enrollment. Children must attend a screening prior to entering the lottery.

**Kindergarten:** Children must be five years of age on or before September 1 to enter Kindergarten.

All children entering the Elementary School register at the front office. Registration requires the following documents: proof of residency, evidence of birth date, DPT shots, immunization against polio, measles, rubella, and mumps, proof of one lead test, and immunization against Hepatitis B. Before entering, proof of immunization must be reviewed by the school nurse. Children not successfully immunized are excluded from school in accordance with Chapter 76, Section 15 of the Massachusetts General Laws, except as specifically provided for by law. The school nurse will make recommendations for exclusion to the Principal.

Pupils will ordinarily be placed with other children of the same grade level but may be placed in another group by the Principal with the approval of the Superintendent. Students transferring from other school systems are asked to bring records from the school they last attended.

If you are planning to move from the BHRSD, please notify the Principal by phone or by written note. The school office needs to know the exit date, your new address, and your child's new school. The school requires a parent's signature for permission to send your child's school records to his/her new school.

### ALL-SCHOOLS ASSEMBLIES & CONCERTS

All-School assemblies and concerts help celebrate our Muddy Brook school community. Family members are welcome to attend these events. Assemblies and Concerts are listed in this handbook as Important Dates and will be announced in the Muddy Brook WAAG.

## ARRIVALS / DEPARTURES

### Arrivals:

#### Early Arrival – 8 am

Adults bringing students to activities prior to the start of school must sign in **at the activity with the adult in charge**. Clubs including unicycle, chess, ukulele, music lessons or practice, and the morning library program begin at 8:00 am and will have a sign-in sheet. **For your child's safety, please escort your child to the activity, make contact with the adult in charge and sign in before you leave.**

#### Bus & Van

Students arriving to Muddy Brook by van or bus will be released from the vehicles starting at 8:30 am. Grades Early K – 4 will enter through the North entrance and proceed to their neighborhood. Breakfast is available for all students starting at 8:30 am. Students join in the grade-level neighborhoods until 8:40. This year the neighborhood meeting will include group activities. If students have an activity such as a music lesson they may first check in with their classroom teacher and then go to the activity.

Car - Student arrival is from 8:35-8:40 a.m. Adults must walk students into the building and students may go to their neighborhood without an adult.

Tardy Arrival - Children who arrive after 8:40 are considered tardy and must report to the office with an adult to sign in.

### End of Day Routines:

**Note: Any change in the regular routine requires a note or End-of-Day-Routine-Change form to the main office.**

Early Dismissal – Any child being dismissed early must be signed out in the office at the time of dismissal. Please send your child to school with a note from home or our “End-of-Day-Routine-Change” form notifying the classroom teacher of the exact time and reason for the dismissal.

Regular Dismissal - Dismissal time is 3:10 - 3:25 PM.

Pick-up: Students being picked up will be called starting at 3:10 from youngest to oldest for dismissal in the front hall. Those picking up should be listed as an approved person on your child's contact information. If your child is being picked up by someone who is not on this list, your child must come to school with an “End-of-Day-Routine-Change” form or a note.

Vans or Buses: Vans will be called starting at 3:15 and bus dismissal will follow. If your child needs to ride a van or bus to a non-routine destination, you must get approval from Massini

Bus Company ahead of time (# 413-229-7962) and fill out an “End-Of-Day-Routine-Change” form or a note. Your child must give this form to his/her classroom teacher in the morning.

End-of-Day-Routine-Change forms are available on the website, from the main office, and from your child’s teacher.

If there is a change of plans during the day, please contact the front office to let them know of this change. (DO NOT rely on emailing your child’s classroom teacher for this communication as s/he may be absent that day.)

## **ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

Muddy Brook Elementary School is committed to engaging students in outstanding educational opportunities every day. Students benefit from multiple educational opportunities including model lessons, discussions, presentations, interactive activities, and teacher/peer participation in the dynamic dialog of coaching, questioning and learning. These shared academic and social experiences are integral to the learning process and cannot be re-created or replicated. Experiences also build on each other. Regular attendance is critical to student success.

Massachusetts law requires compulsory attendance for all students. Chapter 76, section 1 of the Massachusetts General Law states that all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend school. Parents or guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their child is in attendance each day school is in session.

### **Absence, Tardy or Early Dismissal Information**

#### **Notification:**

A parent or guardian should notify the school by telephone each time his/her child is going to be absent, tardy or dismissed early (excused or unexcused). We have a 24-hour answering machine, so you may leave a message at any time (413-644-2350). If your child is being dismissed early, it is helpful to write a note to the teacher for your child to deliver in the morning. DO NOT email your child’s teacher or leave attendance/dismissal information on a teacher phone message. This information must go directly to the main office.

#### **Absence:**

A parent or guardian must notify the school when his/her child is absent. If we have not received notification, we will call phone numbers on file to confirm absence.

#### **Late Arrival:**

A child is considered late for school if he or she is not in the classroom by 8:40. Students arriving late to school must report to the main office accompanied by an adult to sign in. If your child’s bus arrives late, we do not count this as a tardy.

**Early Dismissal:**

A child is considered to be leaving early if he or she leaves before the announced dismissal time. We dismiss youngest to oldest beginning at 3:10. Students leaving early must come to school with a note indicating dismissal time. **Parents should not email teachers with dismissal information.** Adults picking up must report to the office. Office personnel will notify the classroom teacher and then the child will come to the office for dismissal.

**An excused absence, tardy or early dismissal includes:**

- Documented illness or injury
- Documented medical or dental appointment
- Documented court or legal commitment
- Bereavement
- Religious observance
- Extenuating circumstance approved by the school administration

Teachers are not authorized to excuse an absence, a tardy or an early dismissal.

**An unexcused absence, tardy or early dismissal may include, but is not limited to:**

- Repetitive or chronic absence, tardy or early dismissal due to illness or injury not documented by a doctor or other medical professional
- Truancy
- Family vacation - unless the administration has granted approval for a documented educational experience or purpose
- An undocumented absence, tardy or early dismissal
- Non-emergency family situation
- An activity which should be conducted outside the school day, such as hair appointment, shopping, sleeping, doing homework, etc.
- An activity more appropriately related to the parent or guardian, such as providing care for siblings or a transportation situation

Students under the age of sixteen are allowed up to six unexcused absences in a six-month time period as stated by the Massachusetts State Law. Chronic absenteeism is defined as absences in excess of fifteen (15) unexcused days. Parents/guardians are required under the law to ensure regular school attendance of their children and are subject to a fine or other legal action if they fail to comply with the law.

**Attendance Procedure**

Within a six (6) month period, the following steps will be taken:

**Step 1 Five (5) days of unexcused absence, tardy or early dismissal:**

- Letter home reminding parents of attendance policy

**Step 2 Seven (7) days of unexcused absence, tardy or early dismissal:**



- Letter home reminding parents of attendance policy stating that further unexcused school absence may result in the filing of a CRA (Child Requiring Assistance).

**Step 3 Ten (10) days of unexcused absence, tardy or early dismissal:**

- Letter home indicating that the child has exceeded the legal limit and requesting that the parent or guardian schedule a meeting to resolve the unacceptable number of unexcused school absences.
- In the event that parent fails to appear for the formal meeting within a two-week period, the District will initiate truancy/negligence procedures as described below.

**Step 4 Fifteen (15) days of unexcused absence, tardy or early dismissal:**

- District initiates a CRA (Children Requiring Assistance) filing for truancy
- Written notification sent to parents

To see examples of letters we send home see Appendix A.

Please see the **BHRSD Attendance Policy** for more information.

## **ASSIGNMENT TO CLASSES**

Staff teams including classroom teachers, specialists, related service staff, and the administrative team, place students in classes with thought and care. Parent information related to class placement is appreciated. Families are invited to submit thoughts in writing in the spring using the Student Placement Survey. We use a holistic approach to ensure that each child will have a successful school year. After reading each Student Placement Survey, teams meet to consider the content of these surveys as well as fair distribution of girls and boys, individual health necessities, specific academic needs, student inter-personal relationships and learning styles.

## **BERKSHIRE HILLS TECHNOLOGY FUND**

The Berkshire Hills Technology Fund has made an ongoing commitment to assist BHRSD families in obtaining affordable bank financing for a technology purchase or, depending on need, even borrowing a computer at no charge for as long as the student is enrolled in the district. The goal of this project has been to close the "digital divide" - the gap between technological "haves" and "have-nots" - in our school community. Call Chip Elitzer at 413-528-4693 for more information.

## **BREAKFAST & LUNCH PROGRAM**

The District offers a breakfast program at Muddy Brook beginning at 8:30 am in the cafeteria. Lunch begins at 11:00 am. The cost for breakfast is \$1.25 and consists of four components: fruit, grain, meat/meat alternative and an eight ounce low fat milk or non-fat chocolate milk.

The price for lunch is \$2.25 and consists of 5 components: fruit, vegetable, grain, meat/meat alternative and an eight ounce low fat milk or non-fat chocolate milk. Menus are posted on-line and distributed through the weekly newsletter.

If you have received a **NOTICE OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION** from the school's Director of Food Service, Katherine Sullivan, your child/children have qualified for Free Breakfast and Free Lunch – you **DO NOT** need to complete any additional paperwork.

If you are applying for Free/Reduced Lunch Benefits please complete the application (available on-line or at the Muddy Brook main office) and return to the cafeteria or send directly to Katherine Sullivan. You will be notified, by the director, if your child qualifies for free or reduced priced meals. The cost of a reduced breakfast is \$0.30 and a reduced lunch is \$0.40. Please allow one week for your application to be processed.

Please be advised, if your child purchases ONLY milk, the cost is \$0.50 as it is NOT a meal. Any student must meet the meal pattern component requirements to receive Free or Reduced priced meals.

The BHRSD has a computerized debit system for paying for school lunch and breakfast. Parents can make advance payments via cash, check (payable to BHRSD Food Service) or on-line (**www.MYSCHOOLBUCKS.com**). Please contact the director at (413)644-2325 for your student's ID#.

If you are sending in money with your child (cash or check), we ask that you put all payments in a sealed envelope. Label the envelope, "LUNCH MONEY" and put your child's name and classroom teacher name on the outside of the envelope.

Our cafeteria software provides confidentiality of all students (free, reduced or full pay) and is efficient for everyone. It also allows us to keep accurate records of all student transactions. We encourage ALL parents to set up an account at [www.MYSCHOOLBUCKS.com](http://www.MYSCHOOLBUCKS.com). This will allow you to view your child's account balance and/or transactions at any time. There is also a Mobile App available for your phone.

It is important that all meals are paid promptly and account balances are kept current. Emails will be sent daily to all students with a LOW BALANCE or a NEGATIVE BALANCE (owing money). Letters will be sent home in addition to the daily emails when a student has charged more than 5 times. While we try to avoid this, please understand **that an alternative meal may be served if accounts become delinquent.**

**If your account is delinquent and paying the cafeteria bill is a hardship please connect directly with the Principal or Assistant Principal. We have a small fund to support students in need when benefits are unavailable or insufficient to meet the need.**

We encourage all families to complete the application for Free/Reduced Meal Benefits, as this participation directly relates to eligibility for certain federal grants, bringing needed funds to the school district. If your income should change during the school year please complete a new application as this may change your child’s eligibility for meal benefits.

If you have questions regarding the cafeteria, Free/Reduced Lunch Benefits, allergy concerns, etc... please contact the director, Katherine Sullivan at (413)644-2325 or (855)255-8666, [Kathy.sullivan@bhrs.org](mailto:Kathy.sullivan@bhrs.org)

**CURRICULUM AND STATE STANDARDS**

All families will receive a grade level curriculum overview in the first few weeks of school from your classroom teacher(s).

Our curriculum is rich and varied, and it connects students to community partners and our landscape. Additionally units of study align with the Massachusetts Common Core State Standards. To read the standards visit the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/>.

**DELAYED SCHOOL OPENING AND SCHOOL CLOSING**

During inclement weather, the Superintendent of Schools may delay the opening of school from one to two hours, or close school. In the event of severe weather conditions, school closings or delayed openings will be communicated to families via a recorded message sent directly to the phone number on the Emergency School Closing form. The closing is posted on the district website and announced as early as possible on the following radio stations and TV stations:

**Radio Stations:**

- |                  |                                                                      |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Great Barrington | WSBS – am 860                                                        |
| Pittsfield       | WUPE – fm 100.1/94.1,<br>WBRK – am 1340 / fm 101.7<br>WBEC – am 1420 |
| Albany           | WYJB – fm 95.5, WRVE – fm 99.5, WGY - am 810                         |

**TV Stations:**

- Please check your local cable/satellite listings for the proper viewing channel
- |             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| Springfield | WWLP/TV 22 |
|-------------|------------|

Hartford WSHM / 3  
Albany WNYT /13, WRGB / 6, WTEN /10, WXXA , Capital News 9  
Information is also posted on [www.bhrsd.org](http://www.bhrsd.org)

## **DRESS CODE**

We ask that children come to school dressed appropriately for both the weather and in keeping with sensible standards for an educational environment. The school does not deem a particular mode of dress inappropriate unless it disrupts the learning environment, or endangers the child's or some other person's health, welfare, or safety, or is felt to be offensive to another child or adult at school (i.e. sexually suggestive images, inappropriate messages on clothing or messages considered by law to be hateful or biased). **It is expected that students who come to school will participate in all programs unless permission has been granted by the Principal. During cold weather it is extremely important that students have appropriate clothing for outdoor learning. Please be sure your child has a hat, gloves or mittens, a warm coat, snow pants and boots when there is snow on the ground.**

**Let your classroom teacher, Assistant Principal, or Principal know if you need help obtaining warm clothing for your child; we will help.**

Please label all clothing to decrease the possibility of losing these items. Also, please note that students are expected to remove hats while inside the school building.

## **EARLY RELEASE DAYS**

Periodically throughout the year, we have early release days for staff professional development and parent conferences. These days necessitate an earlier bus schedule. Children are released at 12:00 noon. Lunch is **not** served on these days. The School Calendar includes these full and half days and is posted on our website ([BHRSD.org](http://BHRSD.org)) and in Appendix B.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOL**

In the case of an emergency, we will have the closing announced on the radio and use our automated call system. We collect telephone numbers from the emergency contact forms that are distributed at the start of the year. In the event of an emergency you will receive a recorded message from school with all of the necessary information.

## **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

BHRSD has a campus-wide emergency operations plan. At Muddy Brook we practice emergency procedures throughout the school year. Fire Drill escape routes are posted in each classroom. Throughout the school year students will participate in the following emergency safety drills: Fire Drill/Evacuation, Evacuation – On Campus, Evacuation – Off Campus, and Shelter in Place. We will announce drills and share routines in the weekly letter home. We encourage families to discuss drills with students and to emphasize the purpose of the drills is to help us be organized and safe.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips provide enrichment opportunities aligned with curriculum. While all students should participate, repeated inappropriate behaviors during the school year or poor attendance may jeopardize a student's opportunity to do so. Student safety is our top priority. All parents wishing to attend a school field trip are required to complete a CORI check (paperwork may be obtained at the front office) and receive permission to attend from the classroom teacher.

## **FUND RAISING**

Community and parent groups, as well as school personnel wishing to raise funds for school programs, are asked to consult with the Principal. There is a School Committee policy designed to prevent undue solicitation of the community. *(See Policy GBEB of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information.)*

## **GIFTS**

Personal gift exchanges between teachers and students are discouraged. Many families express their appreciation by making a gift to the classroom. If a family would prefer to show its appreciation personally to a teacher, according to school policy, no gift may exceed \$50.00 in value. *(See Policy GBEB of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information.)*

## **HOME TUTORING**

Parents who expect their child will be absent for an extended period of time due to illness or injury should contact the elementary principal about home tutoring.

## **KINDERGARTEN SCREENING**

Children entering kindergarten will participate in a kindergarten screening so that we can better understand your child's learning needs. Kindergarten screenings will take place in the

spring prior to the school year. At the screening the school nurse will conduct a vision and hearing test, and the team will conduct brief assessments of the following:

1. understanding and use of spoken language
2. visual-motor skills and motor coordination
3. early childhood concepts and thinking skills
4. social behavior in the classroom

This screening team consists of the kindergarten teaching team, the school psychologist, a speech therapist, and a special education teacher. These assessments do not in any way constitute a full diagnostic evaluation. The screening instrument is designed to provide only enough information to assist in class placement and to help identify students who may need additional support in kindergarten. You will be informed of your child's screening results and you may follow-up on these findings with your child's classroom teacher in the fall.

Students who miss the spring screening will be screened in September.

### **PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers)**

Students in grades 3 and 4 will participate in ELA (English Language Arts) and math PARCC testing between in April and/or May. We will let you know more detail closer to that time.

The PARCC tests are designed to measure what students know and are able to do and are matched to the Massachusetts Common Core Curriculum Standards.

### **PARENT-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

The front office is available to receive phone calls on school days from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Please stop by or call the front office throughout the school day if you have questions or concerns. If you would like to speak with the administration, please arrange an appointment through the front office. The administration is not always available to receive phone calls during the day but voice messages will be heard and responded to within a day. Emails will be returned in a timely manner as well.

### **End-of-day-routine change communication must go through the front office.**

Staff schedules can vary. It is not reliable to email (or text ) staff about changes in routine.

### **PARENT-TEACHER/STAFF COMMUNICATION AND CONFERENCES**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to visit and become active partners in our school community. Two conferences are scheduled throughout the year, October (parent/teacher) and March (student-led), but you should feel free to contact a teacher for an additional conference at any time. The October conference is one of goal setting and sharing fall assessment data, while the March conference is one where students will lead family members

through a portfolio of work to demonstrate growth throughout the year. It is our hope that all parents/guardians will attend these conferences. If you would like to contact your child's teacher, please call the front office - 413-644-2350. Phone calls will not be put through to teachers during instructional time (8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.), but you may leave a message on voice mail and your call will be returned at the teacher's earliest convenience. Teachers may be emailed at any time and parents can expect a response within one school day. We truly view our work together as team work. Please reach out and team with us so that we may provide the best possible education for your individual child.

**Should any school problem arise concerning your child, please see or call the person directly related to the problem.** School Committee policy BHD (*Section B, Policy BHD of the BHRSD Policy Book*) outlines the steps for resolving problems. Difficulties should be addressed at the level at which they occur. For example, issues with homework, tests, extra help, classroom discipline, and class relationships should be handled at the teacher level. The principal/assistant principal is available for help if issues cannot be resolved. Issues not resolved at the Principal level go to the Superintendent and then the School Committee.

## **PARKING**

Parents and guardians must park in the front parking lot when signing students in in the morning, when visiting the school during school hours, and when picking students up at the end of the day. The parking lot near the playground is closed during school hours (8:00-3:30) to ensure student safety.

The front circle is an idle-free zone. It is not safe or allowed to idle, park or leave young children in the car while dropping off older children. Similarly parking on the side of the street is dangerous and not permitted. Please help us enforce community norms that keep all students, staff and community members safe when entering and exiting the school.

## **PARENTAL SUPPORT AND FUNDRAISING GROUPS**

The Berkshire Hills Regional School District (BHRSD) is appreciative of and grateful for the support parental groups provide for co-curricular activities. Parents participate as spectators, volunteers and fundraisers. It is important to recognize, however, that the BHRSD does not audit or provide accounting for financial records of these organizations.

To provide added credibility for parental organizations and that of the school district, the BHRSD has developed a set of financial accounting requirements. Annually each organization will submit a document of assurance to the District that they are following these

recommendations. In exchange, the BHRSD will allow them to use, subject to applicable District policy, the school/district name, facilities and appropriate equipment as well as publicize their activities.

During the early fall, the School Committee will host a special informational meeting for the heads of these organizations and other interested parties to familiarize them with the procedures to be followed.

## **PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)**

The Muddy Brook Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a group of parents and teachers dedicated to enhancing and maximizing the education of every child at our school. Last year we were able to fund numerous field trips, provide reimbursements to teachers for supplies in their classrooms, and sponsor grade level programs such as the 4<sup>th</sup> grade Berkshire Theater Group program and the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Flying Cloud Residency. We also welcomed new students and families at our annual ice cream social and held several community events, such as family game night, mud day, community dance night, and the storyteller family workshop to name a few. None of these efforts would be possible without the support of families and teachers. The PTA brings home and school closer together so that parents and teachers may work cooperatively for the welfare and education of our children. It is our hope to get EVERYONE involved this year. Let's work together towards the common goal of creating a better school and a better educational experience for our children. We are ALL members of the PTA and we invite everyone to get involved – moms, dads, uncles, aunts, grandparents, guardians, friends, and teachers. For more information, visit our website [www.muddybrookpta.com](http://www.muddybrookpta.com). Remember to like us on Facebook, **Muddy Brook PTA** to get updates about daily Muddy Brook activities and upcoming events. Contact us at [muddybrookpta@gmail.com](mailto:muddybrookpta@gmail.com).

This year's PTA Board members are President Adrienne Rynes (mother of Wyatt, 1<sup>st</sup> grade), Co-Vice Presidents Rebecca Honig (mother of Sadie, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and Noa, kindergarten) and Patty Melville (our school librarian), Treasurer Randi Craft (mother of Owen, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and Silas, kindergarten), Secretary Cory Ziobro (mother of Lucius, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade).

## **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND BEHAVIOR SUPPORT**

*The BHRSD has a policy that complies with the revised physical restraint regulations at 603 CMR 46.01 et seq., effective on January 1, 2016. The complete policy is printed in the District Policy section of this handbook. Key sections are reprinted below.*

Physical restraint is defined as direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations of last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed



inappropriate, and with extreme caution. Physical restraint shall only be used when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the BHRSD school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. Furthermore, any such physical restraint shall be administered so as to prevent or minimize any harm to the student.

This policy shall be reviewed annually and provided to Berkshire Hills Regional School District staff and made available to the Parents of enrolled students. Nothing in this policy precludes any teacher, employee, or agent of the Berkshire Hills Regional School District from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons, or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF ELEMENTARY STUDENTS**

The BHRSD School Committee has a policy (IKE) addressing the promotion and retention of elementary students. Key sections are reprinted below:

The School Committee is dedicated to the best total and continuous development of each student enrolled. The professional staff is expected to place students at the grade level best suited to them academically, socially, and emotionally. In evaluating student achievement, each teacher will make use of all available information, including results of teacher-made tests and other measures of skill and content mastery, standardized test results, and teacher observation of student performance. Students will normally progress annually from grade to grade. Exceptions may be made when, in the judgment of the professional staff, such exceptions are in the best educational interest of the students involved. Exceptions will only be made after prior notification and explanation to each student's parents, but the final decision will rest with the building principal.

## **RECESS PERIODS**

All children have 20-25 minutes of scheduled recess before lunch. Individual classroom teachers are encouraged to schedule an additional recess block during the school day. During inclement weather children may have indoor recess. The recess coordinator in consultation with the administration, determine whether children will go outside to play. **Please be sure your child comes to school with appropriate outdoor clothing as weather conditions can change throughout the day. If we go outside it is expected that your child will join us unless s/he has a doctor's note or special permission from the principal.**

## **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 established School Councils in each school in the Commonwealth. The Berkshire Hills Elementary School Council is made up of parents, teachers, community representatives, and the elementary principal. The purpose of the council is to assist the principal in (1) adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards, (2)

identifying the educational needs of students attending the school, (3) reviewing the annual school building budget, and (4) providing input into the School Improvement Plan. Whenever there is an opening on the Council, parents will be notified and may express an interest to be a member by writing to the principal. All School Council meetings are the first Wednesday of the month from 8:00-9:00. These dates are listed on the Important Dates section of this handbook, printed in the Muddy Brook WAAG and posted on our web site. These meetings are open to the public. Parent representatives to the School Council are appointed through the Muddy Brook PTA. Please contact the principal for more information regarding the School Council.

### **SCHOOL MATERIALS AND PROPERTY**

The School Committee through its professional staff has identified appropriate instructional materials to achieve educational objectives at each grade level. These materials are provided by the BHRSD. Since the books and supplies are provided at public expense, it is expected that children will be responsible for replacement of any materials that are lost or damaged beyond reasonable use. Reimbursement is also expected in the event of damage to buildings, furniture, or equipment caused by misconduct or an act which a child would reasonably be expected to avoid.

### **SCHOOL PICTURES**

School photographs are taken in early September and re-takes are scheduled for some time in early November.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRAL**

A student may be referred for an evaluation by a parent or any person in a care giving or professional position concerned with the student's development, when the child is not making meaningful progress, and when it is suspected that the child has a disability. When a student is referred for an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education, the building principal will invite the parents in for a meeting to discuss the referral, within five school days of receipt of the referral. Following the meeting, should the parent decide to move forward with the evaluation, a consent for testing will be mailed to the parent from the Office of Student Services, within the required five school days. Assessments will be completed within 30 school working days of the date that we receive your signed consent form. We will ensure that evaluators are appropriately credentialed and trained to administer all assessments. Each person conducting an assessment shall summarize in writing the procedures employed, the results, and shall define the student's needs and recommendations for meeting those needs. Once the assessments are completed, a Team meeting will be held at which time the results of the assessments will be reviewed and discussed. You will receive notification of the date, time, and place of the Evaluation Team Meeting once it has been scheduled. The entire process will be completed within 45 school days of the receipt of the Evaluation Consent Form signed by you. The special education Team shall consist of all evaluators, the student's regular education teacher, a special education teacher, an administrator, the parent/guardian and

anyone else relevant to the process. At that time, if there is a determination of eligibility, the Team will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for your child, and determine placement for delivery of services. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Mary Berle, building principal, at 413-644-2350 or Kate Burdsall, Director of Student Services, at 298-4017 extension14.

In some cases a student with a confirmed disability who may or may not need an IEP benefits from a 504 plan. This is a plan that includes accommodations to ensure safety at school and or access to the curriculum. Assistant Principal Nan Thompson coordinates development of 504 plans. Director of Student Services Kate Burdsall and Principal Mary Berle can also answer questions about 504 plans.

### **STANDARD-BASED REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are sent home twice a year in December and June. These reports indicate your child's progress toward the Massachusetts Common Core Curriculum Standards in each academic area and with regard to effort and social and emotional growth. Families are encouraged to regularly contact teachers to discuss student growth and any possible opportunities and or concerns. In March we hold student-led conferences to share growth.

### **STUDENT EMERGENCY RELEASE PROCEDURE**

In emergency situations when it is necessary for your child to leave school during the day, an authorized adult must come to the front office. We will call your student to the main office for dismissal.

**To minimize distractions in the classroom, please do not go directly to your child's classroom.**

If an unauthorized adult needs to pick up your child, an authorized adult must call the office. Authorized adults are listed on our emergency forms. We cannot release your child to an unauthorized adult without permission.

### **STUDENT RECORDS**

Student records of children in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 4 are kept in the main office at Muddy Brook Regional Elementary School. Parents/guardians have the right of access to their child's/children's records. Access to records is obtained by written request to the elementary principal. Release of student information or transfer of records may take place only with the written consent of the parents/guardians. District policy regarding student records can be found in the policy section of this document.

## **MONEY, ELECTRONIC DEVICES, TOYS AND OTHER VALUABLES**

**Money:** Students bringing money to school are asked to place the money in an envelope labeled with the student's name and purpose for the money. We ask that children not bring large amounts of money or other valuable objects to school.

**Electronic Devices:** We do not allow iPods, iPads, cell phones or cameras without special permission. We cannot assume responsibility for any damage or loss that may occur to personal items. Electronic equipment and other objects identified by the principal/assistant principal as inappropriate for school grounds will be confiscated and brought to the principal/assistant principal's office where parents may pick them up.

**Toys:** Toys are **only permitted** at the request of the classroom teacher in connection with learning activities or in connection with special circumstances. In all other cases, toys should be left at home or will be kept in the front office during the school day. Toys won at High Five drawings or earned in special circumstances are to be kept in backpacks throughout the day and taken home right away.

### **TRANSPORTATION – Massini Bus Company**

Free bus transportation is provided to all Early Kindergarten through Grade Four students living within the district and more than one and one-half miles from the school. Bus stops are located within easy walking distance for all students. Please contact Massini Bus Company at 413-229-7962 if you have any questions.

To ensure the safety of all students who ride a bus or a van, **an adult must stand at the bus stop to meet the bus**. If the adult waits in the car, s/he must get out of the car when the bus approaches so that the bus driver can see the adult meeting the bus. If a parent or approved adult is not at the bus stop, the child will be returned to the elementary school and the parent will be required to pick the child up at school.

**If a student is without an adult at the bus stop three times, families can expect bus privileges to be revoked for two weeks.**

To ensure the safety of all students, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who cannot follow the rules for safe transport. A parent/guardian of a child whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their child faces the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with school discipline regulations.

Massini Bus Company requires that any change in routine be authorized prior to the change taking place. Please call the bus company to request a change at 413-229-7962. If the change in

routine is to take place at the end of the day an adult must fill out an “End-of-Day-Routine-Change” form or send a note to school.

If you need to change bus plans during the school day it is necessary to get permission from the bus company to change buses, AND call or email the school secretary, Christine Kelly – 413-644-2350, [christine.kelly@bhrsd.org](mailto:christine.kelly@bhrsd.org). We will let your child know about the change.

If you email Christine Kelly, please include the following information:

- your child’s name
- teacher name
- date
- bus number
- phone number and address of the adult meeting your child at the bus stop
- 

**Do not email your child’s teacher about end of day routine changes during the day as this could result in miscommunication.**

## **VISITORS**

Parents/guardians are always welcome to visit the school and their child’s classroom. As a courtesy to the teacher and to ascertain that your visit will coincide with an activity that you would like to see, we ask that you contact the teacher in advance. If you become a consistent volunteer it is required that we receive an approved “Cori” form from you prior to volunteering.

**All visitors to the school must enter through the front entrance and report to the main office to sign in and obtain a visitor’s badge.**

From time to time, we receive requests to allow other visitors, who may be school-aged children, to spend a day or more with us. These requests may be granted through the approval of the Assistant Principal or Principal.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Parents and community members are encouraged to volunteer regularly and/or share special talents and skills. All volunteers, including those chaperoning school field trips, must complete a Criminal Offender’s Record Inventory (CORI) form *in advance* of volunteering at the school. CORI forms are available from the front office. Please contact the office if you are interested in volunteering. (*Section I, Policy IIJC of the BHRSD Policy Book*)

### **Guidelines for Volunteers**

Occasionally volunteers will observe student behavior that invites or requires adult intervention. In this event the expectation is for the volunteer to connect directly with a staff

member for assistance. At no time should volunteers directly discipline students. This both protects volunteers and helps ensure consistent norms are followed. Please direct any questions with regard to this directly to the principal.

## **DIGITAL RESOURCES**

<http://www.bhrsd.org/>. This is our district website.

<http://mbres.bhrsd.org/>. This is a direct link to the Muddy Brook web page.

These sites feature newsletters, staff pages, educational links, and useful information about the school and district.

Muddy Brook's Facebook page is, Muddy Brook Elementary. Please join our Facebook page for updates.

Muddy Brook PTA also has a website, muddybrookpta.com, and a Facebook page, Muddy Brook PTA.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES For Community Health and Wellness**

**At the beginning of each year all families have the opportunity to approve or not approve sharing of student's images on social media and with community partners.**

Out of respect for student confidentiality and safety, and to respect families, any photos or videos of Muddy Brook students at school related activities must be reviewed by the main office staff prior to posting.

When visiting school or considering school related issues at home we request that all parents and community members communicate directly with staff about concerns or celebrations before texting, posting or engaging social media broadly. Muddy Brook administrators and staff take pride in listening to parent feedback and collaborating directly with all families to support students.

We thank you for working with us to ensure a positive and respectful school climate and the safety of all children.

## **MUDDY BROOK CLASSROOM INFORMATION**

### **ACADEMIC SUPPORT**

Classroom teachers are available to offer academic support after school one day a week. The elementary school remains open after regular school hours for any student requiring extra academic help. Parents will need to contact their child's teacher to set this up. Parents must arrange their own transportation for their child to be picked up no later than 4:00 pm.

### **HOMEWORK**

Teachers assign homework based on classroom work and grade level. Teachers will communicate grade level expectations to families. Families can help begin to develop independence and responsibility in their child or children concerning homework by:

- providing a specific place to do homework that is quiet, has enough work space, and has proper light for good vision,
- supervising and scheduling specific time for homework to be done,
- asking to see completed homework,
- being sure your child brings his/her homework and books back to school each morning,
- informing the teacher when your child does not understand assignments or cannot do the work,
- showing interest in your child's homework and other school experiences,
- talking with, listening to, and doing things with your child,
- letting your child know you care about his/her success, and
- informing the school that another language other than English is spoken at home.

Every effort will be made to ensure homework is meaningful, manageable, and relevant. In 2016-2017 we are reviewing norms and content of homework. If you have feedback with regard to homework please contact your classroom teacher and the Principal.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Lost and found items are located in the school cafeteria. Parents may sign in at the office and look for lost items at any time during the day. Thank you for labeling all coats, hats, gloves and boots with your child's name. We periodically empty our Lost and Found and donate items to Goodwill (January, April and end of school).

### **PARTY INVITATIONS**

**We ask that invitations of any kind NOT be distributed at school.** Invitations brought to school for distribution will be returned to the child or parent by the class teacher. Families can refer to the Student Directory for student contact information. The front office cannot release contact information for any Muddy Brook family.

## **TELEPHONE USE**

We discourage children from using the school phones for personal reasons. Cell phones are not allowed to be used at school and must be kept in backpacks. Phone calls from students to parents or from parents directly to students are reserved for specific circumstances or emergencies. Information can be communicated to students through the front office throughout the school day. The number is 413-644-2350.

## **MUDDY BROOK INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMING**

We believe:

- 1.) All students can perform at high levels.
- 2.) Students thrive with high quality instruction in a caring community.
- 3.) All members of our community are learners.

Our Early Childhood through Grade Four classes are self-contained and heterogeneously grouped.

**GENERAL:** A primary goal of the instructional program is the mastery of grade level standards in the areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. In the interest of the child's total development, experiences are provided to promote physical maturation and foster creative expression. Toward these ends, specialists in art, music, library, technology and physical education teach all classes on a regular basis to supplement those activities presented by the classroom teacher.

### **LITERACY INSTRUCTION**

Literacy instruction; reading, writing, vocabulary, spelling, and speaking, are taught within a framework, which respects and takes advantage of the interconnectedness of these skills. Every class has an extended literacy block. This time is dedicated to a variety of literacy-based activities. The Muddy Brook staff utilizes a range of instructional tools and resources including Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading, Lucy Calkins Writers Workshop, and Words Their Way to guide instruction aligned with the Massachusetts Common Core State Standards (MCCSS). Teachers prioritize integrating reading and writing instruction with social studies and science content where possible.

### **MATHEMATICS**

We follow the Common Core State Standards in mathematics. Our priorities are for students to:

- make sense of problems and persevere in solving them,
- reason abstractly and quantitatively,



- construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others,
- model with mathematics,
- use appropriate tools strategically,
- tend to precision and,
- look for and make use of structure.

A primary resource is **Investigations 3** along with other resources aligned with the MCCSS.

## **SCIENCE**

Muddy Brook Elementary utilizes the Full Options Science System (FOSS) and Engineering is Elementary (EIE). FOSS is a research-based K–8 science program developed at the Lawrence Hall of Science with support from the National Science Foundation. The FOSS developers are dedicated to the proposition that all students learn science best by doing science. FOSS investigations provide in-depth exposure to subject matter while guaranteeing that the cognitive demands placed on students are appropriate to their cognitive abilities. We also partner with Flying Cloud to develop science instruction in connection to our landscape and integrated with the arts.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

The Social Studies curriculum content is derived from the Massachusetts Common Core State Standards. Each grade level prioritizes literature based activities and use of primary sources to support instruction. Grade level scope and sequence for social studies are shared with all families in the first weeks of school.

## **ART**

Each class has art instruction once a week under the direction of the art teacher. The art program provides an exposure to a variety of art media. Students are expected to explore various art forms applying their own level of creativity and imagination to each project or task. The emphasis is on the process of their involvement with various art media. The classroom teachers and the art teacher work to integrate art projects into the regular instructional program.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The children at Muddy Brook have physical education each week, PK and EK at least once a week and grades K-4 twice a week. These classes are taught by our physical education teachers. The program offers each child a chance to learn fundamental fitness concepts, to participate in physical activities, to improve cardio-vascular endurance; to learn social skills in cooperative and competitive settings; to develop an enjoyment of participation in sport, fitness, cooperative, and recreational activities; and to develop basic sport and recreational skills. The program is designed for children to develop strength, endurance, speed, coordination, flexibility, poise, balance, and a good sense of equilibrium.

## **LIBRARY**

The children in Grades pre-K- to 4 are allotted time to visit the library at least once a week. The Muddy Brook School Library/Media teacher prepares lessons that promote curiosity, a love of reading and the development of research skills.

## **General Music**

Singing, rhythm, theory, and music appreciation are taught to each class Prekindergarten – Grade 4 by the music teacher. Our approach to music instruction is largely choral; we do, however, make use of many of the Orff instruments - exposing children to areas of speech, movement, song rhythms, and playing of percussion instruments. The classroom teachers and the music teacher often integrate music with the regular instructional program.

## **Group Ensembles**

Prekindergarten– Grade 2 students participate in a weekly group sing on Wednesdays.

Grade Three students have the opportunity to take group lessons on a string instrument and join the Orchestra and/or the Grade Three Chorus. The Orchestra and Chorus meet weekly. Some students, with permission of their teachers, sign up for both ensembles and alternate weekly group practices.

Grade Four students have the opportunity to take group lessons on **band and/or string instruments**. Grade Four students meet weekly as members of The MBE Band, Orchestra and/or Chorus. Ensembles perform as part of the program of both the winter and spring concerts. Students performing in more than one ensemble sign up in conversation with the music teachers and alternate weekly practices.

We have an agreement with Gerry's Music Shop to offer rental instruments. Parents/guardians of students who wish to take lessons but cannot afford the rental program are invited to contact Kim Chirichella, elementary music teacher, at 413-644-2350 or [kim.chirichella@bhrsd.org](mailto:kim.chirichella@bhrsd.org).

## **ENRICHMENT PROGRAM**

The BHRSD offers an enrichment program for students in grades 1-8 as a component of our Response to Intervention (RtI) plan. The program is based on the School Wide Enrichment Model that was developed at the University of Connecticut. The program offers three tiers of service. First, there are the whole school activities such as assemblies. Then there are class based projects and small group opportunities. Finally, there is a pull-out program for students who have demonstrated high achievement in academic areas.

Admission to the pull-out enrichment program is offered to students based on a combination of achievement test results, classroom achievement, and recommendations. The pull out program features activities such as Literature Circles, Artifact Box, Continental Math League, and Word Masters. At BHRSD, we make every effort to bring the benefits of the program to all students, even if they are not in the pullout portion of the program. If a student is not selected in a given year to participate in the pullout program, it does not mean that they will not be considered in the future. Additionally, if a student is not in the pullout program, he/she has many opportunities to participate in other Enrichment programs.

## **HEAD START**

BHRSD is collaborating with Berkshire County Head Start, which offers an enriched preschool experience for children between 2 years 9 months and five years of age. Head Start provides preschool from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. free of charge to eligible families. Call 413-644-0005 if you are interested in this program. The main office number is 413-499-0137.

## **INTEGRATED PRESCHOOL**

The BHRSD provides preschool education for 3 and 4 year olds found eligible for comprehensive special education services and for an equal number of peer partners. The program is fully integrated and is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Students are enrolled five full days per week. Peer partners are chosen for the program through a lottery system. For more information, please contact building principal Mary Berle ([mary.berle@bhrsd.org](mailto:mary.berle@bhrsd.org)) , or Student Services Director Kathryn Burdsall ([Kathryn.Burdsall@bhrsd.org](mailto:Kathryn.Burdsall@bhrsd.org)).

## **NURSING SERVICES**

A registered nurse, certified by the MA Department of Education as a school nurse, is available full-time to provide the following services: Care of students/staff when they are ill or injured; mandatory screenings which include vision and hearing, height and weight, communicable disease control; immunization control; maintenance of health records; physical assessment and physical examinations; medication administration; health counseling; collaboration regarding pertinent health issues with faculty, staff and other health professionals; environmental health; health agency referrals; specialized health care plans for children with special health care needs.

Please do not send your child to school if he or she has any sign of illness especially a child with a temperature of greater than 100°. In case of illness, the school makes necessary arrangements for the sick child to return home. Typically, the school cannot provide transportation for students who are ill or injured. Please identify on your emergency contact information the person(s) to call if your child is ill or has an accident.

## Social and Emotional Learning and Teaching

We use multiple resources to promote social and emotional health for students and families at Muddy Brook including Responsive Classroom routines, Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, Second Steps lessons, Restorative Justice and Michele Garcia Winner's Social Thinking Curriculum.

### Responsive Classroom

The *Responsive Classroom* approach to teaching emphasizes academic, social, and emotional growth in a strong school community. We believe that *how* children learn is as important as *what* they learn, and that academic success is inextricably tied to building social-emotional competencies.

<https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/about/>

### Restorative Justice

In collaboration with Monument Valley Middle School we are developing a practice of Restorative Justice.

The following description of Restorative Justice is from the Boston Public Schools Code of Conduct.

*Restorative Justice is a philosophy and an approach to addressing misbehavior, conflict, and offenses while keeping students in school and making them accountable for their actions. Restorative Justice asks three questions: what was the harm caused to both the individual and the community; who is responsible for causing the harm and making things right; and how can the harm be repaired and relationships restored to the greatest extent possible. Restorative Justice often involves dialogue between two or more parties or group conferencing*  
– *meeting including the victim, the offender, and the affected community.*

*The main goals are to: provide a safe space so that the victim and community have a say in how to fix the problem and help determine appropriate consequences; put a “face” on the problem so that the offender can understand the impact of their actions; and provide an opportunity for those responsible for the problem to fix it.*

*This restores relationships and reduces the chances of future misbehavior.*

## **PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports)**



Muddy Brook embraces three core values within our PBIS framework: Be Kind, Be Responsible & Work Hard

PBIS is a broad range of school-wide and individualized strategies designed to prevent problem behavior with all students so that they can achieve important social and learning outcomes. Muddy Brook uses the High Five ticket to remind staff that students benefit from five positive statements for every one corrective statement. High-Five tickets are given out by staff to acknowledge students when they make positive contributions.

### **Mission:**

Muddy Brook Elementary is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying. It is our expectation that our staff, students, and community work together to create a positive climate that emphasizes kindness, responsibility, and hard work.

### **Intent:**

Muddy Brook considers positive reinforcement and teachable moments to be the primary focus in creating a positive school climate and culture. This plan has been developed with the intent to promote and focus on positive climate and culture at Muddy Brook School. Below are general guidelines for staff responsibility in documenting both bullying and non-bullying problem behaviors.

### **I – Charts:**

The Muddy Brook Behavioral I-Chart creates a common vocabulary between staff and students on the Independent Behavior Expectations for everyone. Each teacher will make time to teach these skills throughout the year and use them as an opportunity to reward positive independent behavior. These skills are a reflection of the current culture in our school. Professional Development time will be committed each year to reflecting on these behaviors and how they reflect our mission and the core values of our community.

	Classrooms	Bathroom	Hallway	Cafeteria	Assembly & Community Time	Playground	Arrival & Dismissal
<b>Be Kind</b>	Use polite words and actions  Listen to your classmates  Support one another	Respect privacy  Patiently wait your turn  Respectfully use bathroom time	Respect and appreciate student work  Hold doors for others  Yield to younger students	Practice positive table manners  Use polite words and actions  Invite other students to sit with you	Clap appropriately  Eyes watching, ears listening, voices quiet, body still, and heart on the speaker	Use polite words & actions  Take turns and share  Invite others to play	Greet others with hello or goodbye  Yield to younger students  SMILE
<b>Be Responsible</b>	Take care of your work space and materials  Follow classroom expectations  Use and seek help from adults	Wash hands with soap and water  Let adults know if there is a problem  Properly dispose of waste	Stay with your class  Walk on the right-hand side of the stairwell and hallways  Walk quietly and calmly	Pick up after yourself, leave no trace  Clean hands before lunch  Reduce, reuse, & recycle	Enter and exit calmly and quietly  Make good seating choices  Quiet down when requested	Use equipment in a safe and fun way  Be honest  Let adults know if there is a problem	Be prompt and on time  Support younger students  Walk on the right-hand side of the stairwell and hallways
<b>Work Hard</b>	Put your best effort into your work  Try new things  Participate and share ideas	Use quiet voices  Help to keep the bathroom clean	Respect personal space  Go directly to intended location  Watch where you are going	Move about safely  Use an indoor soft voice  Respond quickly to adult requests	Keep hands, feet and body to yourself  Wait patiently  Come ready to participate	Make new friends  Use words to stick-up for yourself and others  Have fun	Wait patiently  Busers: Use the sidewalk and stamp your bus number  Walkers: Watch for your pick-up person and remember to check out

## Second Steps Curriculum

Muddy Brook teachers use the evidence based Second Steps curriculum to teach specific social and emotional skills and to support overall success and understanding of PBIS, Responsive Classroom routines and Restorative Justice.

## Social Thinking Curriculum

In 2016-2017 a Muddy Brook faculty team will train staff in Marie Garcia Winner's Social Thinking Curriculum. This is a high quality curriculum which learning specialists, our school adjustment counselor, special education teachers and speech staff will introduce to all staff as another resource for teaching social pragmatics.

<https://www.socialthinking.com/LandingPages/Mission>

# Muddy Brook Elementary Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

## Bullying, Cyber-bullying, and Retaliation Are Prohibited

*Muddy Brook considers positive reinforcement and teachable moments to be the primary focus in creating a positive school climate and culture. Below are general guidelines for documenting bullying behaviors. This Muddy Brook prevention and intervention plan was approved by the state of Massachusetts in 2012.*

## Priority Statement

Muddy Brook Elementary is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying. It is our expectation that our staff, students, and community work together to create a positive climate that emphasizes kindness, responsibility, and hard work.

## Definitions

**Aggressor** is *a student or group of students* who engage in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

**Target** is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

**Bullying** is conduct that is repeated, by one or more students, and targets another student causing one or more of the following:

- a. physical or emotional harm to the targeted student or damage to his/her property
- b. placement of the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself or of damage to his/her property
- c. a hostile environment at school for the targeted student
- d. infringement on the rights of the targeted student at school
- e. material and substantial disruption to the educational process or the orderly operation of the school

Bullying generally involves "picking on" a student over time and may include:

- a. hitting and shoving
- b. pressuring a student into taking an action he/she does not wish to take

- c. threats, teasing, name-calling, or putdowns
- d. threatening looks, gestures, or actions
- e. cruel rumors
- f. false accusations
- g. social isolation

**Cyber-bullying** is bullying through use of cell phones, computers, or other technology. This may include but is not limited to:

- a. sending derogatory, harassing, or threatening email messages, social-networking messages or posts, instant messages, or blogs
- b. creating websites, social-networking groups or pages, or blogs that make fun of, humiliate, or intimidate others
- c. posting or sending embarrassing or inappropriate pictures or images of others
- d. creating a website, social-networking profile or blog or posting by which the author/ creator impersonates another person

**Hostile Environment** is a circumstance in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education. The targeted student becomes so concerned about bullying that he/she is unable to participate in, and concentrate on, academics and other school activities.

**Retaliation** is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about an incident. It involves a student "getting back at" another student because of a belief that the student reported bullying or provided information about it to an adult or others who may help the targeted student.

### **Acts of Bullying (Including Cyber-bullying) and Retaliation Are Prohibited**

Muddy Brook Elementary School prohibits bullying (including cyber-bullying) and retaliation as defined above both at school and under the following circumstances:

- a. on school grounds or any property next to school grounds
- b. at the bus stop or on school buses or any other school vehicle
- c. at any school-sponsored, or school-related activities, functions or programs
- d. through use of any school computers, internet connection or other school based technology
- e. at a location or during activities that are not school related, or by using private computer or cell phone, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the targeted student, infringes on the rights of the targeted student at school, or otherwise disrupts the orderly operation of the school

### **How to Report Bullying**

Students who believe they are targets of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, or who know about bullying or cyber-bullying conduct should report conduct to their grade level, classroom teacher, principal, or assistant principal. Students may also report the conduct to the school adjustment guidance counselor, building specialist teachers, or other school staff members, who will in turn report the incident, in writing, to the principal or designee.

### **Complaint Notification:**



**A. Anonymous complaints:**

Should anonymity be requested, the principal or his designee shall meet with the student to review the request for anonymity and the impact of the anonymity on the complaint. Anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation.

**B. Informal/Verbal complaints by students:**

Students may make informal/verbal complaints of conduct that they consider to be bullying to a teacher, administrator or staff personnel. Such informal/verbal complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including time, place, the number of occurrences, target of the alleged act and potential witnesses. All personnel who receive the informal/verbal complaint shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing. This written report shall then be forwarded to the Principal, Assistant Principal, or the School Adjustment Counselor.

**C. Formal/written complaints:**

Students and/or their parents or guardians may file written reports of conduct that they consider to be bullying. These written reports shall be specific as to the action giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including time, place the number of occurrences, target of the alleged act and potential witnesses. Such reports must be filed with the principal or her designee.

**Addressing Concerns Regarding Bullying**

**A. Safety**

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying and/or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee, at their discretion and in accordance with applicable law, contacts parents or guardians prior to the investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

Responses to promote safety may include, but shall not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; predetermining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, and a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation. The confidentiality of students and witnesses reporting alleged acts of bullying and/or retaliation will be maintained to the extent possible given the school’s obligation to investigate the matter.

The Principal or his designee will be responsible for taking steps to investigate and otherwise address reports of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. Students who engage in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation will be subject to discipline by the Principal, subject to any procedural requirements. In making disciplinary decisions, the Principal will consider both the need for accountability and the importance of utilizing positive behavior reinforcement. The range of consequences that may be implemented includes but is not limited to:

- verbal warning

- written warning
- positive behavior/restorative justice reinforcement
- parent conference
- behavior management plan
- internal or external suspension
- expulsion from school

In addition to any consequences, the Principal/Designee will report conduct relating to bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation to local law enforcement if it's believed that criminal charges may be pursued.

I. Staff responsibilities and intervention strategies:

A. Staff who witness acts that may be bullying, as defined above, shall promptly file with the principal or designee a written incident report of the events witnessed. If a staff member is told by a student of a particular event that staff member is obligated to file a written report to the principal or designee.

B. In addition to addressing both informal and formal complaints, staff members are encouraged to address the issue of bullying in other interactions with students. Staff will create opportunities to educate students about bullying behavior through classroom meetings, counseling, and reinforcement of positive universal behavior expectations. All staff members should intervene whenever they observe conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, humiliating or intimidating another individual, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of "bullying."

II. Administrative Responsibility:

A. Investigation

The principal or designee after being notified of a complaint will promptly begin an investigation. H/She shall complete the BHRSD Incident Reporting Form when the investigation is complete. The form will include findings of fact, and determinations of acts of bullying are verified. When acts of bullying are verified the form will include recommendations of intervention and disciplinary actions. *(Please note that anonymous complaints will not have any discipline actions included until an investigation deems appropriate.)*

In addition to any disciplinary action, the Principal/Designee will report conduct relating to bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation to local law enforcement if s/he believes that criminal charges may be pursued.

B. Intervention for Aggressor

Once verified as a harassing and/or bullying act, a meeting is planned within 3 school days with parents, principal, teacher(s), and adjustment counselor and/or any other invested parties to discuss all incidents and create a behavioral plan that addresses and reinforces consistent positive behavior. The plan will involve consistent reinforcement from home and all stakeholders within the building. The Principal will follow through to assign a logical consequence that addresses the problem behavior, involving an extended period of time. This will be detailed in a documented *Conduct Plan*. All information relative to the incident will be documented using a BHRSD Incident Reporting Form. This will be monitored by all involved, and give our students a chance to modify their own behavior. The plan will phase out when behavior has noticeably changed.

A second verified harassing and/or bullying act will result in a second meeting with principal, staff, parents, and students. This meeting will have more invested parties trying to resolve the issues with the target and the harasser. The behavior plan will be modified and extended. This may include changes to the initial *Conduct Plan*.

Anytime the Principal or designee feels that harassing activities have occurred, school discipline may be rendered. Also, anytime the Principal or Designee feels a criminal act has occurred, the GBPD will be notified to investigate.

C. Intervention for the targeted student(s)

Intervention strategies for a targeted student may include:

- Counseling
- Peer mentoring
- Increased supervision and monitoring
- Empowering student to seek help when victimized
- *A written Safety Plan*

D. Community Intervention Strategies:

- Broad commitment to reward universal positive behavior expectations
- Planned annual professional development programs addressing bully/target problems.
- Data collection to document history of bully/target problems to examine nature and scope of the problem
- Educate peers to help avoid and deter bullying behavior.
- Offer wide range of resources and prevention techniques to avoid bullying behavior.
- Community wide awareness and involvement of students, staff and parents in examining the modern issue with regard to bullying and cyberbullying.
- Modeling by staff of positive, respectful, and supportive behavior and relationships to students

**Closing a Complaint Regarding Bullying**

In the event school staff determines that bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has taken place, the principal or designee will, in addition to taking disciplinary action:

- Notify the parent or guardian of the aggressor.
- Inform parents or guardian of the targeted student of the steps that have been taken to prevent further actions to the extent consistent with applicable legal restrictions.
- Notify local law enforcement, if s/he believes that criminal charges against the aggressor may be pursued.

**The above language is intended to be consistent with the BHRSD's policy addressing Bullying.**

Legal References:

*Massachusetts General Law Chapter 92*

**PROJECT CONNECTION**

Project Connection is an after school and summer program that is funded by a grant from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center. This is a federal grant distributed to the states

through the, “No Child Left Behind Act” of 2001. Project Connection focuses on students, based on grant requirements, and develops after school programming with academic enrichment opportunities along with other activities designed to complement the student’s regular academic programming. We partner with local community groups, agencies, and individuals to provide creative and experiential learning opportunities. Local partners include Berkshire United Way; IS.183, [www.is183.org](http://www.is183.org) ; Flying Cloud Institute, [www.flyingcloudinstitute.org](http://www.flyingcloudinstitute.org) , Multicultural Bridge, [www.multiculturalbridge.org](http://www.multiculturalbridge.org) ; Berkshire South, [www.berkshiresouth.org](http://www.berkshiresouth.org) ; and the Berkshire Botanical Garden, the Brien Center, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, Fairview Hospital, The Stockbridge Congregational Church and others. Programs run throughout the year starting in late September and continuing through the spring. If you have any questions, the director Tom Kelly can be reached at 413-644-2300, ext. 3306 or by email at [projectconnection@bhrsd.org](mailto:projectconnection@bhrsd.org).

### **RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI)**

Muddy Brook uses the Response to Intervention (RtI) approach with students. RtI is a process for assessing and maximizing the ‘opportunity to learn’ for students who are struggling in any content area. RtI emphasizes the importance of effective, culturally responsive instruction and early intervening service for all students prior to making a referral to Special Education.

The features of RTI focus on “accountability for results.” This includes:

- High-quality, culturally-responsive classroom instruction
- Universal screening
- Continuous progress monitoring
- Early implementation of research-based interventions
- Frequent progress monitoring for measuring growth

### **SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT COUNSELOR (SAC) and School Based Clinician**

School Adjustment Counselors and our school based clinician are licensed mental health providers who coordinate services with the student, educational staff, parents, and community resources to support the social/emotional wellbeing of the child and a positive climate school wide. In addition to providing short term individual and group counseling, parent consultation, crisis management, and home visits, the Counselors support teachers with the trauma informed pro-social curriculum offered to students in every classroom. SAC services are data-based, enhancing collaboration and integration between home, school, and the community to promote mental health and success in school. Services include individual and group *Second Step* and *Social Thinking* lessons, group counseling, social skills groups, crisis management, bullying prevention lessons, and parent consultation. Our SAC helps coordinate community based services and supports teaming with all related service personnel and school staff.

A student may be referred for services by a parent, school personnel, or a student may self-refer. The SAC may meet with a student and consult with teachers or school staff to assess the situation. If short term counseling is deemed appropriate, the Counselor will contact the family to discuss concerns and goals, or to discuss other recommendations or referrals. Our counselor will also support families in connecting with community resources including individual and/or family therapy, home based mentors, medical referrals and any wraparound services that may be helpful. Reasons to contact the School Counselor include: trauma, divorce or family changes, loss, grief, anxiety, addiction, support for grandparents who are caregivers, or school adjustment issues. Parents are encouraged to contact the School Adjustment Counselor to discuss student concerns or changes at home.

### **SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST**

The school psychologist conducts individual psychological evaluations of students referred by the Director of Student Services. The school psychologist also participates in Special Education team meetings, 504 evaluation meetings, Kindergarten Screening, and Student Support Teams (SST). In addition, the school psychologist provides intervention services as determined by a child's Team.

### **SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY**

The speech and language program provides speech and language instruction by a licensed speech language pathologist. This program helps children who have difficulties in the areas of articulation, language, rhythm, and voice. After diagnosis, appropriate therapy is prescribed. Instruction, treatment, and drill take place in an individual, small group or a classroom setting.

### **TECHNOLOGY**

Technology instruction at Muddy Brook begins in first grade and continues through 4th grade.

#### **Curriculum:**

During technology class students explore the following topics/activities: Lego robotics, digital citizenship, application of digital tools and technology basics, word processing, age appropriate keyboarding, presentation software, introduction to coding/computer programming, and on-line learning sites. In addition to that, K-4 students have the opportunity to come to "open lab" times to working on reading and math programs and special projects with their teacher throughout the year.

*Students focus on:*

#### **Digital Citizenship:**

Our comprehensive curriculum is designed to empower students to think critically, behave safely, and participate responsibly in our digital world. Units focus on internet safety, privacy and security, information

literacy, and relationships & communication. Each designed to be developmentally appropriate for each grade, building on each other as students' progress from 1<sup>st</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> grade. Units consist of formal lesson plans, videos, student interactives, and assessments. As well as family outreach materials. A primary resource for this work is Common Sense Media.

**Keyboarding:**

We began a new keyboarding program this winter called, Keyboarding Without Tears. This is a multisensory curriculum that teaches pre-keyboarding, keyboarding, digital citizenship, and general computer readiness skills.

Keyboarding Without Tears has been awarded a Seal of Alignment for Readiness by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE).

Highlights of this curriculum include:

- Developmentally appropriate [by grade level](https://www.hwtears.com/kwt/grade-levels)<https://www.hwtears.com/kwt/grade-levels>
- Easy to learn, with fun, game-based engaging activities
- Developmental progression of skills
- Unique focus on pre-keyboarding motor skills
- Simplified approach to correct finger placement and two-handed typing
- Fun, integrated words per minute and accuracy Spot Check
- Web-based for classroom and school-to-home connections

**Scratch Jr.:**

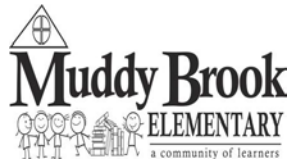
Students in grade 1& 2 work with this introductory programming language developed by MIT, through the use of their web based app on iPads. This program allows students to learn to think creatively, reason systematically, and work collaboratively. As students code, they learn how to create and express themselves with technology, not just interact with it. In the process students learn how to create their own interactive stories and games.

**Lexia Reading:**

Lexia is a comprehensive, technology-based reading program providing structured, sequential, scaffolded instruction covering six areas of reading: phonological awareness, phonics, structural analysis, automaticity/fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. This program is introduced in kindergarten and supported throughout 4<sup>th</sup> grade during Technology throughout the year. We provide login information for remote access to the Lexia program from home as well.

Instruction in educational technology is given to students in grades 1-4 once a week.

MUDDY BROOK REGIONAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
Berkshire Hills Regional School District  
Great Barrington                      Stockbridge                      West Stockbridge



July 18, 2015

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Every school district in Massachusetts is required to report to the Massachusetts Department of Education each year student data by race and ethnicity categories that are set by the federal government. The Department of Education does not report individual student data to the federal government, but does report the total number of students in various categories in each school. These reports help us keep track of changes in student enrollments and ensure that all students received the educational programs and services to which they are entitled.

The federal government recently changed the reporting categories for student data. As a result, you have the opportunity to update student data on your child, if you wish to do so. With the new reporting categories, you may now identify your child by ethnic group (either Hispanic/Latino or not Hispanic/Latino) **and** by *one or more* racial groups (American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African-American, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, White). Starting with the 2005-2006 school year, all schools in Massachusetts report student data to the Department of Education using these categories.

If you would like to update the student data for your child, please contact the school office. To check the student data currently on file for your child, please speak with Christine Kelly in the office. If we do not hear back from you, we will continue to report based on the student data we currently have. For more information about the student data reporting categories, please see:

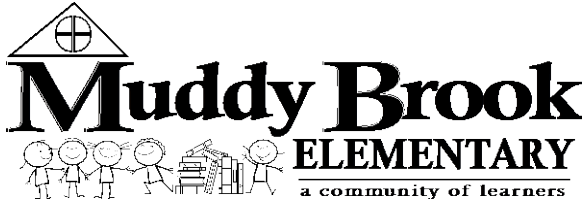
[http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/guides/race\\_faq.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/guides/race_faq.html).

Sincerely,

Mary Berle  
Principal

## Appendix A: Attendance Letters

Please note the following letters we will send home in accordance with Massachusetts state law in response to multiple absences from school or frequent tardiness.



**Mary Berle – Principal**  
**Nan Thompson – Assistant Principal**  
Berkshire Hills Regional School District  
318 Monument Valley Road  
Great Barrington, MA 01230  
413.644.2350

### *Attendance Letter #1*

**Date, 2016**

**Adult Name**

**Address**

**City, MA 01230**

### **Re: Child's Name**

We at Muddy Brook Regional Elementary School believe that attendance is an integral part of a student's total educational experience. Regular school attendance enables a student to benefit from multiple educational opportunities that exist within a day; model lessons, discussions, presentations, and interactive activities. We urge you to stress the importance of punctuality and good attendance. The development of good habits in these areas will be invaluable to future success in life.

It has been brought to my attention that your child's attendance is of concern. According to our records your child's attendance is as follows:

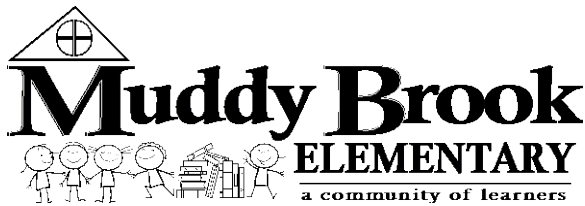
- Unexcused Days Absent \_\_\_\_
- Unexcused Days Tardy \_\_\_\_
- Unexcused Early Dismissal \_\_\_\_

Our Attendance Policy and Procedure is outlined in our Student & Family Handbook. It states that when a student has accrued 5 unexcused absences, tardies or early dismissals, we send a letter home reminding you of the importance of good attendance. We hope your child's attendance can improve.

Please call the office if you would like to speak with me regarding the policy or any questions you may have. (413-644-2350)  
Sincerely,

Nan Thompson, Assistant Principal





**Mary Berle – Principal**  
**Nan Thompson – Assistant Principal**  
Berkshire Hills Regional School District  
318 Monument Valley Road  
Great Barrington, MA 01230  
413.644.2350

*Attendance letter #2*

**Date, 2016**

**Parent Name**

**Address**

**City, MA 01230**

**Re: Child's Name**

We at Muddy Brook Regional Elementary School believe that attendance is an integral part of a student's total educational experience. We urge you to stress the importance of punctuality and good attendance. The development of good habits in these areas will be invaluable to future success in life.

It has been brought to my attention that your child's attendance is of concern. According to our records your child's attendance is as follows:

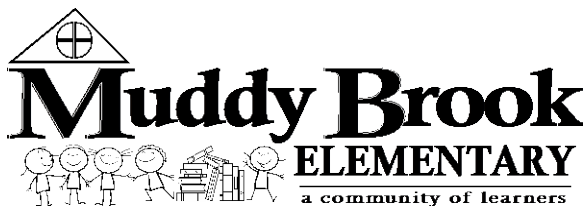
- Unexcused Days Absent \_\_\_\_
- Unexcused Days Tardy \_\_\_\_
- Unexcused Early Dismissal \_\_\_\_

According to our Attendance Policy and Procedure as outlined in our Student & Family Handbook, when a student has accrued 7 unexcused absences, tardies or early dismissals, we send a second letter home reminding you of the importance of good attendance. We invite you to call and set up an appointment to discuss the situation so that we can better support you in improving your child's attendance. Please be advised that if attendance does not improve, we may need to file a CRA (Children Requiring Assistance). (413-644-2350)

We hope your child's attendance record can improve. Please be in touch.

Sincerely,

Nan Thompson, Assistant Principal



**Mary Berle – Principal**  
**Nan Thompson – Assistant Principal**  
Berkshire Hills Regional School District  
318 Monument Valley Road  
Great Barrington, MA 01230  
413.644.2350

*Attendance Letter # 3*

**Date, 2016**

**Parent Name**

**Address**

**Town, MA 01266**

**Re: Child's Name**

In **month** and in **month** I sent you a letter emphasizing the importance of good attendance because I was concerned about your child's attendance record. Today I write because your child's attendance has exceeded the legal limit.

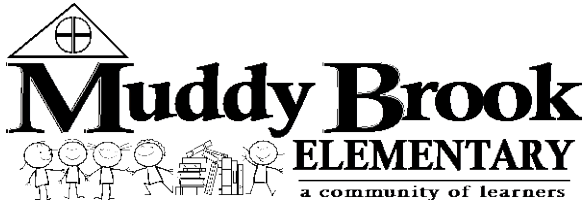
According to our records your child's attendance is as follows:

- Unexcused Days Absent \_\_\_\_
- Unexcused Days Tardy \_\_\_\_
- Unexcused Days Dismissed Early \_\_\_\_

The Massachusetts State Law requires compulsory attendance for all students. Chapter 76, section 1 of the Massachusetts General Law states that all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend school. Parents or guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their child is in attendance each day school is in session. The school day at Muddy Brook begins at 8:40 and ends at 3:20. We expect your children to come to school on time and leave at dismissal. I am requesting a formal meeting to discuss the situation. At this point in time excellent attendance is critical. If your child's attendance is not excellent, we will file a CRA (Children Requiring Assistance) and a Preliminary Hearing will be set in court. Please contact Christine Kelly to schedule a meeting with me as soon as possible - 413-644-2350.

Sincerely,

Nan Thompson, Assistant Principal



**Mary Berle – Principal**  
**Nan Thompson – Assistant Principal**  
Berkshire Hills Regional School District  
318 Monument Valley Road  
Great Barrington, MA 01230  
413.644.2350

*Attendance Letter # 4*

**Date, 2016**

**Parent Name**

**Address**

**Town, MA 01266**

**Re: Child's Name**

In **month**, **month** and in **month** I sent you letters emphasizing the importance of good attendance and reiterated the point that your child's attendance has exceeded the legal limit. I informed you of the fact that if your child did not demonstrate excellent attendance, I would file a CRA (Children Requiring Assistance).

The Massachusetts State Law requires compulsory attendance for all students. Chapter 76, section 1 of the Massachusetts General Law states that all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend school. Parents or guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their child is in attendance each day school is in session. The school day at Muddy Brook begins at 8:40 and ends at 3:20. Children are expected to come to school on time and leave at dismissal. Where your child has been consistently absent or tardy it is our legal obligation to inform the court.

On **date** I filed a CRA (Children Requiring Assistance). A Preliminary Hearing date will be set in court.

Sincerely,

Nan Thompson, Assistant Principal

## Section 2: Berkshire Hills Regional School District Policies

### Berkshire Hills Regional School District

#### School Committee

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>E-mail Address</u></b>	<b><u>Represents</u></b>
Stephen Bannon, Chair	<a href="mailto:scbannon@gmail.com">scbannon@gmail.com</a>	Great Barrington
Richard Bradway, Vice Chair	<a href="mailto:rbradway@me.com">rbradway@me.com</a>	Stockbridge
Dan Weston, Asst. Treasurer	<a href="mailto:dwestonsc@gmail.com">dwestonsc@gmail.com</a>	Stockbridge
Christine Shelton, Secretary	<a href="mailto:christine_shelton@yahoo.com">christine_shelton@yahoo.com</a>	Great Barrington
William Fields	<a href="mailto:fieldswil@gmail.com">fieldswil@gmail.com</a>	Great Barrington
Frederick Clark	<a href="mailto:fredclarksc@yahoo.com">fredclarksc@yahoo.com</a>	Great Barrington
Richard Dohoney	<a href="mailto:rich.dohoney@gmail.com">rich.dohoney@gmail.com</a>	Great Barrington
Jason St. Peter	<a href="mailto:jstpetersc@gmail.com">jstpetersc@gmail.com</a>	Stockbridge
Kristin Piasecki	<a href="mailto:kcherin@gmail.com">kcherin@gmail.com</a>	West Stockbridge
Andrew Potter	<a href="mailto:andypottersc@gmail.com">andypottersc@gmail.com</a>	West Stockbridge

## **Berkshire Hills Administrators and Central Office Staff**

### **Superintendent of Schools**

Dr. Peter Dillon  
Doreen Twiss, Administrative Secretary

### **Business Administrator**

Mrs. Sharon Harrison

### **Director of Operations**

Mr. Steven Soule

### **Business Office Staff**

Heidi Alibozek, Payroll  
Cathleen Bourquard, Accounts Payable  
Marianne Conklin, Business Office Accountant

### **Director of Student Services**

Kathryn Burdsall  
Barbara Middleton, Secretary

### **Director of Learning and Teaching**

Joshua Briggs

### **MUDDY BROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Mary Berle, Principal  
Nan Thompson, Assistant Principal

### **MONUMENT VALLEY REGIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Ben Doren, Principal  
Miles Wheat, Assistant Principal

### **MONUMENT MOUNTAIN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL**

Marianne Young, Principal  
Scott Annand, Assistant Principal

## **Berkshire Hills Regional School District Strategic Plan**

### **BHRSD Mission**

**To ensure all students are challenged through a wide range of experiences to become engaged and curious learners and problem solvers who effectively communicate, respect diversity, and improve themselves and their community.**

- **Student Achievement/Growth/Enlightenment**

- Foster an intellectually challenging and supportive education that expands academic and career opportunities for all.
- Expand learning beyond the school walls to include nature, the community, and with partners.
- Excite and engage students in learning
- Problem solving shall be used as an educational tool in and across disciplines
- Students will demonstrate their achievement and growth in a variety of ways and the data will be used effectively in the evaluation and revision of curriculum and instruction.
- Use flexible schedule to meet varied student needs: pre-test, post-test, in order to allocate resources efficiently
- Use personal relationships to maximize a social-emotional safety net.
- Explicitly make curricular connections between and across grades, schools, and districts.
- The school experience is engaging, verdant, and empowering.
- Challenge our expectations and approaches to working with the underserved.

- **Human Infrastructure**

- Focus on an unrelenting commitment to success for all students and all staff.
- Foster leadership opportunities for both young people and adults including a partial rotating administration position.
- Make decisions that are good for students first and adults second (these don't need to be mutually exclusive).
- Use evaluation to set standards, recognize excellence and/or challenges provide support and when necessary after providing feedback and support to dismiss ineffective staff.
- Study and potentially pilot incentive pay programs to encourage excellence and innovation.
- Take true advantage of our sacred professional development time.

- **Resources/Financial Planning/Infrastructure Maintenance**

- Increase revenue through adding new K and 1 sections while maintaining class size.
- Generate other income through reworking contracts, writing grants and individual solicitations.

- Collaborate additionally to increase opportunities and potentially realize savings.
- Revisit how we allocate resources: funds, space and time in support of our goals.
- Rework how we use time including reconsidering the length of the school day.
- Rethink roles.
- Shift from a culture of advocacy for individual programs to one of problem solving for all students.
- Work to improve food offerings, including additional healthy choices, and realize efficiencies
- **Communication/Collaboration**
  - Be clear and transparent.
  - Be explicit about the work in schools.
  - Ensure that each student is well known by multiple adults.
  - Ensure that adults are collectively responsible for small groups of students.
  - Make schools more community oriented.
  - Redefine existing roles (Role clarification: SC, Supt, Dept chairs/dept liaison, students and families).
  - Looks past building to campus, past campus to district and community, past district to collaborating districts.
  - Tap into and enhance the role of alumni.

## **DISTRICT POLICIES**

All District policies are available for review in the main office of each school building, and in the Central Office.

### **ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

The Berkshire Hills Regional School District seeks to provide a means for educating young people in a democratic tradition, to foster recognition of individual freedom and social responsibility, and to inspire meaningful awareness of and respect for the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Recognizing that freedom carries with it responsibility, academic freedom also carries with it academic responsibility which is determined by the basic ideals and goals of the local community. Discussion and analysis of controversial issues should be conducted within the framework of the educational philosophy and objectives of the Berkshire Hills Regional School District. The right to discuss and debate controversial issues is the most essential part of the student's freedom of learning and the Berkshire Hills Regional school District through its school staff, encourage and protect the exercise of that right within the bounds of relevancy and intelligent inquiry. *(See Section I, Policy IB of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

### **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS**

**The Berkshire Hills Regional School District School Committee approves the following regulations governing administration of medications in the schools under its jurisdiction.**

1. Management of the Medication Administrative Program.
  - A. The school nurse shall be the supervisor of the medication administration program in the school.
  - B. Medication (licensed prescriber) orders/parental consent: **NEEDED FOR BOTH PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS AND OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS (TYLENOL, MOTRIN, BENADRYL.)**
    1. The school nurse shall ensure that there is a proper medication order from a licensed prescriber which is renewed as necessary, including the beginning of each academic year. Only the school nurse shall receive a telephone order or an order for any change in medication. Any such verbal order must be followed by a written order within three school days. Whenever possible, the medication order shall be obtained, and the medication administration plan shall be developed before the student enters or re-enters school.  
**AND**
    2. The school nurse shall ensure that there is a written/signed authorization by a parent or guardian to administer any and all medications.

Both the doctor's order form and the parental consent form can be obtained from the school nurse; she can be contacted in the health office at 413-644-2373.

*(See Section J, Policy JLCD-R of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

### **AIDS (ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME)**

Whereas, there is a great deal of concern in the community about the history, symptoms, and transmissibility of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and AIDS Related Complex (ARC); and



Whereas, misinformation or lack of knowledge regarding the scope of the disease could result in improper decisions about children's attendance at school; and Whereas, a comprehensive policy on AIDS and ARC has been developed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, which has been adopted by the Massachusetts Department of Education as policy; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Massachusetts Medical Society strongly recommends at this time that school systems in the Commonwealth appropriately implement an official policy governing school attendance by children and teachers with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and AIDS Related Complex (ARC) using the guidelines currently developed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

*(See Section J, Policy JLCCA of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Regular school attendance is important to the learning process and establishes good work habits. Attendance in the classroom with the opportunities therein provided to interact with the teacher and other students is an integral part of the learning experience. All students are required by law to attend school every day that school is in session. Parents or guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their child is in attendance each day school is in session, unless he/she is absent for one of the following reasons:

### **Excused Absences**

- Illness – after five consecutive days of illness, the school may require a not from a doctor.
- Bereavement
- Documented medical or dental appointments
- Documented court or legal commitments
- Religious holidays
- School field trips
- Other extenuating circumstances approved by the school administration.

Teachers are not authorized to excuse absences.

### **Unexcused Absences**

All other reasons for absence will be considered unexcused even if the student was given permission to miss school by their parent. Students are allowed up to six unexcused absences in a six-month time period. The Massachusetts State Law specifies that a student under 16 years of age may not be absent more than six (6) unexcused day sessions in a six (6) month period. Chronic absenteeism is defined in absences in excess of fifteen (15) unexcused days. Parents are required under the law to ensure regular school attendance of their children and are subject to a fine or other legal action if they fail to comply with the law. The local school administration or designee will be provided with the names of students with seven or more unexcused absences during a six-month period.

Some examples of unexcused absences are, but not limited to:

- Family vacations/trips unless the administration has granted approval for a documented educational experience or purpose.
- Truancy
- Activities which should be conducted outside the school day, such as hair appointments, shopping, sleeping, doing homework, etc.
- Activities more appropriately related to the parent/guardian, such as providing care for siblings, absence due to parent transportation, etc.

**Notification:** Parents should notify the school by telephone each time their child is absent (excused or unexcused). It should not be assumed that the school will provide academic work for all absences. Please see individual school handbooks for procedures. School administration or designee will determine if the absence is excused. If the parent does not call the school, school personnel will call the child's home, parent's workplace, or emergency contact to confirm the absence.

### **Attendance Procedure**

Within a six (6) month period, the following steps will be taken

#### **Step 1**

#### **Five (5) days of unexcused absence:**

- Principal or designee sends letter home reminding parents of attendance policy.
- At the discretion of the Principal, a follow up call is made to parents to further explain policy and develop plan for improved attendance

#### **Step 2**

#### **Seven (7) days of unexcused absence:**

- Letter from Principal and follow up conversation between Principal or designee and family to discuss child's pattern of unexcused absences. The letter states that further unexcused absences may result in a referral to the Department of Social Services and /or Berkshire District Court

#### **Step 3**

#### **Ten (10) days of unexcused absence:**

- Letter home indicating that the child has exceeded the legal limit.
- Principal or designee requests a formal meeting with parents to discuss ways school and home can work together to resolve unacceptable number of unexcused absences.
- In the event that parent fails to appear for formal meeting within a two-week period, the District will initiate truancy/negligence procedures as described below.

#### **Step 4**

#### **Fifteen (15) days of unexcused absence:**

- The District initiates a CHINS (Child IN Need of Services) filing for truancy or a Failure to Send Action, with the Southern Berkshire

District Court and/or a 51-A filing for child Neglect with the Department of Social Services.

- Written notification sent to parents

*(See Policy JH of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information.)*

### **EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY**

In the course of a school year, there may be a need to evacuate students, employees and/or visitors from school buildings.

Each school building administrator will develop an evacuation plan approved by the Superintendent. This plan will be published as part of the staff handbook as well as the student/parent handbook.

On an annual basis, the procedure will be reviewed with staff and students. Evacuation drills involving students and staff will occur regularly, with documentation, regarding date and evacuation time. (Recommended quarterly)

The evacuation procedure of each school building will include:

1. The methods by which classrooms, specialty areas and restrooms are to be cleared of occupants;
2. The procedure by which disabled employees and students are to be assisted in exiting the building;
3. How attendance checks of students and staff are to be taken and recorded;
4. How central office, police and fire departments (when applicable) are to be notified;
5. How parents are to be notified (if applicable);
6. The location of an alternate building site to be used;
7. The procedure by which the building will be made safe for re-entry by students and staff.

*(See Section E, Policy EBCA of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION (ELE)**

The goal of the English Language Education (ELE) program of the Berkshire Hills Regional School District is to support the progress of LEP (Limited English Proficient) students in the four English language domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These students (known as English Language Learners (ELL)) receive content instruction in English at the appropriate academic and grade level. Any newly enrolled student with a language other than English spoken at home will be assessed for English Language Proficiency within 30 days of enrollment at school. Based on the results, students will be placed in a regular education classroom/schedule with support services in English as a Second Language as needed.

All parents have the right to waive ELL services. Information on the waiver procedure is available through the principal of each school. A Language Assessment Team (LAT) will convene once a student is identified as LEP. The LAT may include, but is not limited to: parent/guardian, principal, guidance counselor and/or school psychologist, ELL coordinator, teachers, and interpreter (when possible and if necessary). During that meeting, a specific education plan and schedule for the year will be developed.

Programming options available to students are documented in the student/parent handbook. The mini-handbook (in Spanish and English) for students eligible for ELE services and their parents/guardians also provides information about ELE programming options and legislative rights. In addition, internet resources for families can be found in the ELE Parent Handbook.

All students will be assessed annually for progress. Once deemed fluent in spoken and written English. The student (now known as a FLEP =formerly Limited English proficient) will be exited from the ELE program and monitored for at least one year to insure continued progress.  
(Section I, Policy IHBE of the BHRSD Policy Book)

### **EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

In recognition of the diversified characteristics and needs of our students and with the keen desire to be responsive to them, the School Committee will make every effort to protect the dignity of the students as individuals. It also will offer careful consideration and sympathetic understanding of their personal feelings, particularly with reference to their race, creed, sex, religion, nationality, and physical and intellectual differences.

To accomplish this, the Committee and its staff will make every effort to comply with the letter and the spirit of the Massachusetts equal educational opportunities law (known as Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971), which prohibits discrimination in public school admissions and programs. The law reads as follows:

No child shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and course of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

This will mean that every student will be given equal opportunity in school admission, admissions to courses, course content, guidance, and extracurricular and athletic activities.

All implementing provisions issued by the Board of Education in compliance with this law will be followed.

(See Section J, Policy JB of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)

## **DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS**

From time to time, parents or other citizens may have problems or concerns that they wish to bring to the attention of appropriate school officials. To assist parents in this regard, the following general guidelines may be helpful:

- Any concern regarding a school-related matter should first be raised by the parent with the staff member most directly involved (i.e., questions regarding the content of instructional materials or homework assignments should be raised with the teacher involved).
- If the matter remains unsolved, the parent may wish to speak with the building principal. Appointments can be scheduled by contracting the office of the principal involved.
- If the matter is still unresolved, the parent may wish to speak with the superintendent. For an appointment, simply contact the superintendent's office.

*(See Section B, Policy BHD of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

## **HAZING**

The Berkshire Hills Regional School Committee adopts Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 269, Sections 17 - 19 as amended by Chapter 6665 of the Acts of 1987 requiring all secondary schools to distribute copies of Anti-Hazing Law to student groups, teams or organizations.

Specifically, the law requires that:

1. Secondary schools distribute copies of the law to student groups, student teams or student organizations.
2. While copies of the law must be distributed to members, plebes, pledges or applicants of student groups, teams or organizations, the burden for such distribution is on the individual student group, team or organization.
3. It is the duty of each student group, team or organization, through a designated officer, to deliver annually to the school an attested acknowledgement that: each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants has received a copy of the law, and the group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the law.
4. Each secondary school distribute the law, on at least an annual basis, to full-time enrollees. (In our opinion, this obligation may be met by including the law in a student handbook which is distributed to all students at the start of each school year.)
5. Each secondary school adopt a discipline policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing and include it with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook.
6. Each secondary school file an annual report with the Department of Education certifying that it has complied with its responsibilities under the statute: it has adopted a

disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and the policy is given appropriate emphasis in the student handbook.

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or imprisonment for not more than a year, or both. Whoever knows of an incident of hazing and does not report the crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

*(See Section J, Policy JICFA of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

## **HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION**

### ***(Educational Services in the Home Or Hospital)***

Upon receipt of a physician's written order verifying that any student enrolled in the Berkshire Hills Regional School District or placed by the district in a private setting must remain at home or in a hospital on a day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for medical reasons and for a period of not less than 14 school days in any school year, the principal shall arrange for provision of educational services in the home or hospital. Such services shall be provided with sufficient frequency to allow the student to continue his or her educational program, as long as such services do not interfere with the medical needs of the student. The principal shall coordinate such services with the Director of Student Services for eligible students.

*(Section I, Policy IHBF of the BHRSD Policy Book)*

## **HOMELESS STUDENTS**

Any homeless student who enters the Berkshire Hills Regional School District will be immediately enrolled in the appropriate school even if he or she is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, or proof of residency.

*(Section J, Policy JG of the BHRSD Policy Book)*

## **District Policy on Homework**

The term "homework" refers to an assignment to be prepared during a period of supervised study in class or outside of class.

The purposes of homework are to improve the learning processes, to aid in the mastery of skills, and to create and stimulate interest on the part of the student.

Homework is a learning activity which should increase in complexity with the maturity of the student.

With increased maturity, learning should become an independent activity. This should be established through consistent assignments which encourage students to investigate for themselves and to work independently as well as with others.

Homework assignments should be consistent in terms of the amount given each day and the time required for each assignment so that a pattern of meaningful homework can be established by the teacher and/or the student.

The information for any homework assignment should be clear and specific so that the student can complete the assignment.

Homework assignments should take into consideration individual differences of students such as health, ability, conditions at home, and educational resources at home. Homework should not require the use of reference materials not readily available in most homes, school libraries, or the public library, and should require the use of those materials only when the student has had instruction in the use of them.

There are many other learning activities in the life of a student besides homework. Such things as participating in school activities, pursuing cultural interests, participating in family living, and exploring personal interests should be considered by teachers when planning consistent assignments. Homework is not to be used as a form of punishment under any circumstances. *(See Section I, Policy IKB of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

## **INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING BEHAVIOR**

Bullying and harassment are major distractions from learning. The grades of the victims can suffer. Fear can lead to chronic absenteeism, truancy, or even dropping out of school. Bystanders feel both guilty and helpless for not standing up to the bully.

### ***Definition***

Intimidation and bullying of any type have no place in a school setting. **The Berkshire Hills Regional School District will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment free of intimidation and bullying.**

*Intimidation is any threatening action whose initiation by whatever means, creates a climate of hostility. It is also the use of language, conduct, or symbols in such manner as to be commonly understood to convey hatred or contempt.*

*Bullying* is defined as the act of one or more individuals intimidating one or more persons through verbal, physical, mental, or written interactions. Bullying can take many forms and occur in virtually any setting. It can create unnecessary and unwarranted anxiety that will affect attending school, walking in corridors, eating in cafeterias, playing in the school yard or recreation areas, participating in or attending special and extra-curricular activities, or riding on the bus to and from school each day.

As a rule, bullying behavior starts in elementary school and peaks in the middle school years. However, it attracts more attention from adults when it appears in high school. There the students are older and physically larger and the behavior is recognized as being less tolerable and more inappropriate. Also, sexual harassment is, in fact, often a form of bullying.

Most bullying by students starts out verbally - teasing and put-downs - and may become progressively worse and may *eventually* assume physical dimensions.

Examples of intimidation **and** bullying include but are not exclusive to:

1. Name-calling, teasing, jokes, gestures that are offensive, foul or vulgar language.
2. Verbal or physical abuse for the expressed purpose of gaining control or engendering fear.
3. Other threats of any kind, stated or implied.
4. Assaults on students, including those that are verbal, physical, psychological and emotional.
5. Attacks on student property.

*(See Section J, Policy JICFB of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

## **NONDISCRIMINATION**

Public schools have the responsibility to overcome, insofar as possible, any barriers that prevent children from achieving their potential. The public school system will do its part. The District's policy of nondiscrimination will extend to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability. *(See Section A, Policy AC of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

## **NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF HANDICAP**

Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1992 requires that no qualified individual with a disability shall, because the district's facilities are inaccessible to or unusable by individuals with disabilities, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, and activities of the district or be subject to discrimination. Nor shall the district exclude or otherwise deny services, programs, or activities to an individual because of the known disability of a person with whom the individual is known to have a relationship or association.

### **Definition**

A "qualified individual with a disability" is an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modification to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by the district.

### **Reasonable Modification**

The District shall make reasonable modification in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the District can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.

### **Communications**

The District shall take the appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. To this end, the District shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy benefits of, a service, program, or activity conducted by the District. In determining what type of auxiliary aid or service is necessary, the District shall give primary consideration to the requests of the individuals with disabilities.



### **Auxiliary Aids and Services**

"Auxiliary aids and services" includes (1) qualified interpreters, note takers, transcription services, written materials, assisted listening systems, and other effective methods for making aurally delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments; (2) qualified readers, taped texts, audio recordings, Braille materials, large print materials, or other effective methods for making visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual impairments; (3) acquisition or modification of equipment or devices and (4) other similar services and actions.

### **Limits of Required Modification**

The District is not required to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens. Any decision that, in compliance with its responsibility to provide effective communication for individuals with disabilities, would fundamentally alter the service, program, or activity or unduly burden the District shall be made by the School Committee after considering all resources available for use in funding and operating the program, service, or activity. The decision shall be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion.

### **Notice**

The District shall make available to applicants, participants, beneficiaries, and other interested persons information regarding the provisions of Title II of the American With Disabilities Act (ADA).

### **Compliance Coordinator**

The District designated the Director of Student Services to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title II of ADA, including any investigation of any complaint communicated to it alleging its noncompliance or alleging any actions that would be prohibited under ADA. The district shall make available to all interested individuals the name, office address, and telephone number of the employee(s) so designated and shall adopt and publish procedures for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited under the ADA. The school system receives federal financial assistance and must comply with the above requirements. *(See Section A, Policy ACE of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

## **BERKSHIRE HILLS REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### **Physical Restraint and Behavior Support Policy**

*This policy complies with the revised physical restraint regulations at 603 CMR 46.01 et seq., effective on January 1, 2016*

Physical restraint is defined as direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations of last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. Physical restraint shall only be used when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the BHRSD school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. Furthermore, any such physical restraint shall be administered so as to prevent or minimize any harm to the student.

This policy shall be reviewed annually and provided to Berkshire Hills Regional School District staff and made available to the Parents of enrolled students. Nothing in this policy precludes any teacher, employee, or agent of the Berkshire Hills Regional School District from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons, or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

#### **1. Methods for Preventing Student Violence, Self-Injurious Behavior, and Suicide**

- a. Individual crisis planning/Crisis Intervention Plans
  - i. Call the building based Crisis Team

- ii. Call the regional Crisis Team
  - iii. Develop strong relationships and collaborations with all community service providers
  - iv. Referral to State Agencies such as Department of Mental Health (DMH), Department of Children and Families (DCF), and (Department of Developmental Services (DDS)
  - v. Referral to local mental health providers and wrap-around service providers such as the Brien Center
  - vi. Completion of a Functional Behavioral Analysis
  - vii. Completion of a Risk Assessment and/or Threat Assessment
  - viii. Development of Behavior Intervention Plan
  - ix. Development of an Individual Safety Plan
  - x. Referral for Special Education Eligibility
- b. De-Escalation Techniques
- i. Silence and space
  - ii. Remove demands
  - iii. Wait time
  - iv. Calming language and affect
  - v. Allowance for choices and negotiation
  - vi. Make high probability requests and provide immediate positive feedback
  - vii. Remove the audience
  - viii. Remove dangerous objects
  - ix. Planned ignoring and redirection
  - x. Self-regulation techniques such as deep breathing or other sensory strategies
  - xi. Allow student to safely burn off energy

## **2. Methods for Engaging Parents**

- a. Berkshire Hills Regional School District will conduct an annual workshop, open to the entire school community, concerning restraint prevention and the use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure. This workshop may be coordinated with the special education parent advisory council, the parent-teacher organization, and other relevant community groups.
- b. Any parent with concerns about the use of physical restraint at any school within Berkshire Hills Regional School District may request a meeting with the building Principal or the Superintendent to discuss such concerns. Any individual who believes that a physical restraint of a student may have been unwarranted or conducted inappropriately may also make use of the Grievance Procedure described in Section 10, below.

## **3. Alternatives to Physical Restraint and Methods of Physical Restraint**

### **a. Alternatives**

Physical restraint shall not be used unless the following, less intrusive behavior interventions and supports have been unsuccessful or deemed inappropriate by school staff:

- Positive behavioral interventions
- Verbal redirection
- Verbal directive to cease behavior
- Opportunity for a break
- De-escalation techniques
- Loss of earned tokens/rewards/privileges
- Opportunity for time-out
- Physical escort to a separate space for time-out

### **b. Methods of Physical Restraint:**

Physical restraint shall not be used as a means of discipline or punishment; if the student cannot be safely restrained due to medical contraindications which have been documented by a licensed physician and provided to the District; as a response to property destruction, disruption, refusal to comply with rules or staff directives, or verbal threats when those actions do not constitute a threat of assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. Physical restraint shall not be used as a standard response for any individual student. Physical restraint is an emergency procedure of last resort.

The following forms of physical restraint shall only be administered by trained personnel, using only the amount of force necessary to protect the student or other member(s) of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. The staff member(s) administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation. Staff shall continuously monitor the physical status of the student during restraint, and the student shall be immediately released from the physical restraint if the student expresses or demonstrates significant physical distress.

All physical restraints must terminate as soon as the student is no longer an immediate danger, or if the student indicates that he/she cannot breathe, or if the student is observed to be in severe distress. If any physical restraint approaches twenty (20) minutes, staff will obtain the approval of the building Principal to continue the restraint based upon the student's continued agitation. All physical restraints shall be administered in compliance with 603 CMR 46.00.

- i. Crisis Prevention Institute Child Control Position – standing solo restraint
- ii. Crisis Prevention Institute Team Control Position – two person standing restraint
- iii. Crisis Prevention Institute Team Transport – two person standing escort

#### **4. Prohibited Forms of Restraint**

- a. Medication restraint, mechanical restraint, and seclusion restraint, as defined in 603 CMR 46.02, are prohibited in the Berkshire Hills Regional School District.
- b. Any form of physical restraint used in a manner inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.00 is prohibited in the Berkshire Hills Regional School District.
- c. Prone restraint, as defined in 603 CMR 46.02, shall only be permitted under the following, limited circumstances:
  - i. The student has a documented history of serious self-injury and/or injuries to other students or staff;
  - ii. All other forms of physical restraint have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or the safety of others.
  - iii. There are no medical contraindications documented by a licensed physician;
  - iv. There are no psychological or behavioral contraindications documented by a licensed mental health professional;
  - v. The student's Parent has provided voluntary, informed, written consent to the use of prone restraint; and
  - vi. The building Principal, or designee, has provided written approval.

Berkshire Hills Regional School District will not use prone restraint unless the above circumstances have been documented in advance.

## **5. Staff Training, Physical Restraint Reporting, and Follow-Up Process**

### **a. Staff Training:**

- i. All staff/faculty will receive training regarding the District's physical restraint policy within the first month of each school year, and employees hired after the school year begins will receive training within one month of starting their employment.
- ii. Required training for all staff will include review of the following:
  - 1) Berkshire Hills Regional School District Physical Restraint and Behavior Support Policy;
  - 2) School building-level physical restraint procedures, including the use of time-out as a behavior support strategy;
  - 3) The role of the student, family, and staff in preventing physical restraint;
  - 4) Interventions which may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors and alternatives to restraint;
  - 5) When in an emergency, the types of permitted physical restraints and related safety consideration, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when any restraint is used;
  - 6) Identification of Berkshire Hills Regional School District's staff who have received in-depth training (as set forth below in section (a) (iii) in the use of physical restraint.
- iii. In-Depth Training
  - 1) At the beginning of the school year, the building Principal will identify those designated staff who will participate in in-depth training and who will then be authorized to serve school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint.
  - 2) Designated staff members shall participate in approximately sixteen (16) hours of in-depth training in the use of physical restraint, with at least one refresher training annually.
  - 3) In-depth training will include:
    - A. Appropriate procedures for preventing the need for physical restraint, including the de-escalation of problematic behavior, relationship building and the use of alternatives to restraint;
    - B. A description and identification of specific dangerous behaviors on the part of students that may lead to the use of physical restraint and methods for evaluating the risk of harm in individual situations in order to determine whether the use of restraint is warranted;
    - C. The simulated experience of administering and receiving physical restraint, instruction regarding the effect(s) on the person restrained, including instruction on monitoring physical signs of distress and obtaining medical assistance;
    - D. Instruction regarding documentation and reporting requirements and investigation of injuries and complaints;
    - E. Demonstration by participants of proficiency in administering physical restraint; and
    - F. Instruction regarding the impact of physical restraint on the student and family, including but not limited to psychological, physiological, and social-emotional effects.

### **b. Physical Restraint Reporting**

- i. Report to building Principal:
  - 1) Staff shall verbally inform the Principal of any physical restraint as soon as possible, and by written report within one (1) school day.
  - 2) The Principal or designee shall maintain an ongoing record of all reported instances of physical restraint.
- ii. Report to Parent(s) of Physically Restrained Student:
  - 1) The Principal or designee shall make reasonable efforts to verbally inform the

student's Parent of the physical restraint within twenty-four (24) hours.

- 2) The Principal or designee shall provide the Parent a written report of the physical restraint within three (3) school days. This written report may be provided via email, if the Parent has provided the District with an email address.
- 3) The Parent and/or student may respond to the Principal or designee to comment on the use of the physical restraint and the information in the written report. The Parent and/or student may also pursue the Grievance Procedure described in Section 10, below.

iii. Report to Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE):

- 1) Whenever a physical restraint results in injury to the student or any school community member, the District shall send a copy of the written report to DESE within three (3) school days. A copy of the ongoing physical restraint log from the past thirty (30) days will also be provided to DESE.
- 2) Berkshire Hills Regional School District shall also report physical restraint data annually to DESE, as directed by DESE.

c. Follow-Up Procedures

- i. After a student is released from a physical restraint, staff shall implement follow-up procedures, including:
  - 1) Reviewing the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the physical restraint;
  - 2) Reviewing the incident with the staff member(s) who administered the physical restraint to ensure proper restraint procedures were followed; and
  - 3) Consideration of whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the physical restraint, if any.

**6. Building Principals Shall Develop and Implement Procedures for Period Review of Physical Restraint Data.**

- a. These procedures shall include weekly review of physical restraint data to identify individual students who have been restrained multiple times during the week, and if any such student(s) is identified, to convene a review team to assess the student's needs.
- b. These procedures shall include monthly, administrative review of school-wide physical restraint data.

**7. Building Principals Shall Develop And Implement Procedures To Ensure that the Reporting Requirements of this Policy and 603 CMR 46.06 Are Met.**

**8. Building Principals Shall Develop and Implement Procedures for Providing Timely, Oral and Written Notice to the Parents of Any Student Who Undergoes Physical Restraint.**

**9. Building Principals Shall Develop and Implement a Procedure for the Use of Time-Out.**

- a. Such procedure shall include the process by which staff will obtain the Principal's approval for any time-out lasting longer than thirty (30) minutes. Such approval shall be based on the student's continuing agitation.

**10. Grievance Procedures.**

This grievance procedure is established to ensure procedures are in place for receiving and investigating complaints regarding physical restraint practices. Any individual who believes that a physical restraint of a student may have been unwarranted or conducted inappropriately may file a complaint by utilizing this procedure:

The complaint must be submitted in writing or on audiotape to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent will meet with the complainant within ten (10) school days of receipt of the complaint.

A thorough investigation will be conducted which may include interviewing witnesses, staff involved and/or the student; reviewing all written documentation leading up to and pertaining to the incident and all reports filed with the Superintendent and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

A written report will be developed by the Superintendent and provided to the complainant.

## **SCHOOL COUNCILS**

The Berkshire Hills Regional School District, in compliance with Section 53 of Chapter 71 of the Acts of 1993, mandates the establishment of School Councils in each of the district buildings.

The Principal of each school has the responsibility for defining the composition of the Council and convening the first meeting no later than 20 days after the first day of school.

Membership on the Council shall include the Principal, who serves as one of the two co-chairs, teachers at the school, parents of students attending the school, at least one student for Monument Mountain Regional High School, and other persons including community leaders who are not parents, teachers or students at the school. The number of parents on each School Council must equal the number of teachers plus the Principal. Other than this, the size of the Council is up to local discretion provided that the number of "other persons" does not exceed 50% of the Council's membership. School Councils should also be broadly representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the school building and the Berkshire Hills Regional School District.

*(See Section B, Policy BDFA of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

It is understood by the Berkshire Hills Regional School District Committee and its employees that sexual harassment violates Title VII of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Chapter 2788 of the Acts of 1996. Sexual harassment is discriminatory and a violation of the professional ethics expected of all employees, volunteers, community organizations, and the like, associated with the Berkshire Hills Regional School District.

As an educational organization, the Berkshire Hills Regional School District endeavors to provide an employment climate and a school climate that holds as one of its tenets respect for the right of all individuals involved. Inherent to this is the right of all involved to be free from discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is defined as: "Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature - when submission to or rejection of such conduct is either implicitly or explicitly made a term or condition of an individual's employment, academic performance or evaluation; or when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's employment or academic work, or creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive working, academic or social environment." (See Section A, Policy ACAB of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

In order to provide students with appropriate instruction and educational services, it is necessary for the school system to maintain extensive and sometimes personal information about them and their families. It is essential that pertinent information in these records be readily available to appropriate school personnel, be accessible to the student's parents or legal guardian and/or the student in accordance with law, and yet be guarded as confidential information.

The Superintendent will provide for the proper administration of student records in keeping with state and federal requirements, and shall obtain a copy of the state student records regulations (603 CMR 23.00). The temporary record of each student enrolled on or after June 2002 will be destroyed no later than seven years after the student transfers, graduates or withdraws from the School District. Written notice to the eligible student and his/her parent of the approximate date of destruction of the temporary record and their right to receive the information in whole or in part, shall be made at the time of such transfer, graduation or withdrawal. The student's transcript may only be destroyed 60 years following his/her graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from the school system.

The Committee wishes to make clear that all individual student records of the school system are confidential. This extends to giving out individual addresses and telephone numbers. (See Section J, Policy JRA of the BHRSD Policy Book for full policy)

### **A. General Provisions**

The student record contains all information concerning a student that is kept by the school district and which personally identifies the student; it consists of the temporary record and the transcript. For purposes of these procedures, custodial parent refers to a divorced or separated parent who has physical custody of the child, and the non-custodial parent is the parent who does not have physical custody of the child. Non-custodial parents may not be eligible to access their child's student record, or may have to follow certain procedures in order to access the student record. See Section C below

The rights outlined below may be exercised by the custodial parent(s)/guardian(s) for a student under the age of 14 years, or jointly by the student and custodial parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child over the age of 14 years. A student over the age of 14 is called "an eligible student". A student 18 years or older may, in writing, deny his custodial parent(s)/non-custodial

parent(s) access to his/her student record, with the exception of transcripts, report cards and/or progress reports.

Each eligible student and custodial parent/guardian, except as limited herein for certain parents, has the right to see the student record for that student within ten (10) days of submitting a written request to see the records. Copies of any records may be obtained upon request and shall be provided within ten (10) days of the request. The District may charge for the cost of reproducing copies.

The student's record is available to authorized school personnel who work directly with the student, or administrative/clerical personnel who need to have access to records in order to carry out their responsibilities. The term "authorized school personnel" includes, but is not limited to, administrators, teachers, counselors, therapists, paraprofessionals, administrative office, staff and clerical personnel. Authorized school personnel included those employed by the District or under contract with the District as an independent contractor. Authorized school personnel do not need permission to see student records.

No information in the student's record is available to anyone outside the school system without written permission from the eligible student and/or parent and/or guardian, unless the requesting party is listed an exception as provided by the Student Records regulations. Exceptions to the requirement of written permission include, but are not limited to, a probation officer, court order, subpoena, where health or safety requires the disclosure of student information/records or upon transfer to another school district. However, eligible students and/or their parents/guardians will generally be notified before these records are released. A written release must be signed to have any part of the school record sent outside the school. This includes, but is not limited to prospective employers, other technical school, and colleges.

An eligible student and parent/guardian have the right to request to add relevant information to the student's record as well as the right to request removal of information believed to be untrue or incorrect.

#### B. Directory Information Notice

The Berkshire Hills Regional School District has designated certain information contained in the education records of its students as directory information for purposes of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Student Record Regulations at 603 CMR 23.00 et seq.

The following information regarding students is considered directory information: (1) name, (2) address, (3) telephone number, (4) date and place of birth, (5) major field of study, (6)



participation in officially recognized activities and sports, (7) weight and height of members of athletic teams, (8) dates of attendance, (9) degrees, honors and awards received, (10) post high school plans of the student.

Directory information may be disclosed for any purpose in the discretion of the school system, without the consent of a parent of a student or an eligible student. Parents of students and eligible students have the right, however, to refuse to permit the designation of any or all of the above information as directory information; such refusal must be in writing and made annually. In that case, this information will not be disclosed except with the consent of a parent or student, or as otherwise allowed by FERPA and 603 CMR 23.00 et seq. You are hereby notified that pursuant to this notification, the school system will provide requested directory information to military recruiters unless the parent or eligible student specifically directs otherwise, as required by the No Child Left Behind Act (applies only to High School).

Any parent or student refusing to have any or all of the designated directory information disclosed must file written notification to this effect with the principal on or before the 15th day of each September.

In the event that a refusal is not filed, it is assumed that neither a parent of a student or eligible student objects to the release of the directory information designated.

#### C. Rights Of Certain Divorced or Separated Parents

It is necessary for divorced parents to submit a copy of the custody agreement or order, and any subsequent changes made thereto, to the District so that District personnel may identify which of the parents has physical custody of the child. The non-custodial parent may access his/her child's record unless

1. the parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student, and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
2. the parent has been denied visitation, or
3. the parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
4. there is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.

The District shall place in the student's record any documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).

**Non-Custodial Parent Access:** In the case of a non-custodial parent who is eligible to access the student record, i.e., does not fit any of the four (4) categories under 1-4 above, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal. Upon receipt of the request, the principal and/or his/her designee shall immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth under 1-4 above.

When the student record is released to the non-custodial parent, the school will delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records will be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

**D. Amending Your/Your Child's Record**

1. A parent has the right to add information, comments, data, or any other relevant written material to the student's record. The parent should submit the additional information in writing to the principal with a written request that the information be added to the student record.
2. A parent has the right to request in writing deletion or correction of any information contained in the student's record, except for information which was inserted into that record by the TEAM. Such information inserted by the TEAM shall not be subject to such a request until after the acceptance of the Individual Educational Plan (IEP), or, if the IEP is rejected, after the completion of the special education appeal process. Any deletion or amendment shall be made in accordance with the procedure described below:
  - (a) If a parent is of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in the student's record, the parent shall present the objection in writing and/or have the right to have a conference with the principal or his/her designee to make the objections known.
  - (b) The principal or his/her designee shall within one week after the conference or receipt of the objection, if no conference was requested, render to such parent a decision in writing, stating the reason or reasons for the decision. If the decision is in favor of the parent, the principal or his/her designee shall promptly take such steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.
  - (c) If the principal's decision is not satisfactory to the parent, the parent may file an appeal to the Superintendent. Such appeal shall be in

writing and submitted to the Superintendent within five (5) business days of receipt of the principal's decision. The Superintendent shall render a written decision on the appeal within two (2) weeks of receipt of the written appeal.

(d) If the Superintendent's decision is not satisfactory to the parent, the parent may appeal to the School Committee by filing a written appeal within five (5) business days of receipt of the Superintendent's decision. The School Committee shall conduct a hearing as required on the appeal as required by 603 CMR §23.09(4).

#### E. Notice On Transfer To Other Schools

Pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(g), notice is hereby given to parents and eligible students that the District forwards the complete school record of a transferring student to schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. Such transfer of records takes place without consent of the parent or eligible student.

#### F. Destruction of Records

2. Notice is hereby given that the temporary record of a student will be destroyed no later than seven (7) years after that student transfers, graduates or withdraws from the school system. When the student transfers, graduates or withdraws from school, and if the eligible student or the parent/guardian want the temporary record, they must request, in writing, prior to the last day of school, that the documents be provided to them. No additional notice, other than this notice in the handbook, will be provided to the student or his parent/guardian of such destruction.
3. In addition, each year, the principal and/or teachers and/or other service providers may destroy the following documents that are considered part of the student's temporary record: disciplinary records (other than documentation of suspensions/expulsions/exclusions), any notes from the Parent/guardian or other documents concerning absences, early dismissals, late arrivals, as well as examples of student work. If the eligible student or the parent/guardian want those records, they must request, in writing, prior to the last day of school that the documents be provided to them, rather than be destroyed. No additional notice, other than this notice in the handbook, will be provided to the student or his parent/guardian of such destruction.

*(See Section J, Policy JRA of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

### **STUDENT SMOKING**

**It shall be unlawful for any student enrolled in the Berkshire Hills Regional School District to use or possess tobacco products of any type on school grounds or in school buildings.**

*(See Section J, Policy JICG of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

### **TOBACCO USE ON SCHOOL PREMISES**

Use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, school facilities, on school grounds or

school buses, or at any school sponsored activities by any individual, including school personnel and students, is prohibited at all times.

Possession of any tobacco products within the school buildings, school facilities, or on school grounds or school buses or at any school sponsored activity by any student is prohibited at all times.

A staff member determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

A student determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the student discipline code.

This policy shall be promulgated to all staff and students in appropriate handbook(s) and publications.

Signs shall be posted in all school buildings informing the general public of the district policy and requirements of state law.

*(See Section A, Policy ADC of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

### **VERTICAL ACCELERATION OF STUDENTS**

It is a focus of the Berkshire Hills Regional School District to provide opportunities for its students to achieve in academics and, where possible, advance academically through both enrichment opportunities and grade/course acceleration. The enrichment process allows students not only to master grade level curricula, but to utilize this information in new, different, and challenging situations. This is the first step beyond mastery of presented curricula. Acceleration proceeds above this level and allows a student to bypass a grade, or subject area within a grade, provided total mastery and enrichment opportunities have been exhausted.

The process by which vertical acceleration will be considered for implementation is as follows:

1. Parent, student, and/or faculty member may present a request for consideration of vertical acceleration.
2. The parent, student, and/or faculty must present a rationale for vertical advancement to another course or grade level.
3. The teacher and, where appropriate, the guidance counselor must present a thorough summary of classroom achievements and assessment of the student's academic progress.
4. The school psychologist should complete a thorough psycho-educational evaluation as appropriate.
5. The Principal will call for a team meeting involving the parents, teacher(s), school psychologist, and any other school personnel critical to the team meeting. At this meeting, all information regarding the student's academic progress and social/emotional maturity will be reviewed. The request for vertical acceleration will be based on the evaluation and achievement materials presented.
6. The team will make a recommendation to the principal regarding whether or not vertical acceleration should occur and, the team will recommend a plan of action for its implementation. The principal will make a decision with the approval of the superintendent, regarding this recommendation. If the recommendation is not approved, the parent, student, and/or faculty member may request a review after six months.
7. The classroom teacher(s) and the building Principals will implement the plan. It will be the teacher's responsibility, along with the guidance counselors, where appropriate, to monitor student progress.

8. Regular communication regarding student progress will occur. Should the student have difficulty with the vertical acceleration, another team meeting will be activated to assess the situation and recommend changes in the program. Should the student succeed in the vertical acceleration, additional team meetings may be necessary to continue developing action plans for vertical acceleration in additional academic school years. The steps will follow those outlined above.

*(See Section I, Policy IKEA of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

## **WEAPONS VIOLATIONS**

**Weapons Prohibited:** Carrying or handling of any weapon in the school building, on school grounds, in any school vehicle, or at any school-sponsored activity is prohibited. Such weapons or objects include but are not limited to weapons, explosives, guns, knives, dangerous objects, or any object that can reasonably be called a weapon.

**Exceptions:** An exception may be made for participants in authorized curricular or extracurricular activities.

**Reporting:** Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71 calls for certain actions to take place in reference to weapons violations. Section 37L requires the following actions by schools in the case of a disciplinary incident involving a dangerous weapon:

"Any school department personnel shall report in writing to their immediate supervisor an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time."

"Supervisors who receive such a weapon report shall file it with the Superintendent of said school, who shall file copies of said report with the local chief of police, the department of social services, the office of student services or its equivalent in any school district, and the local School Committee."

**Penalties:** Students found in violation of this policy will be subject to possible suspension, expulsion, and police intervention. School Administrators will use great care to use good reason and common sense in handling weapons discipline cases. Care will be taken to insure that reasonable judgment will be used to avoid overreacting by calling an object a weapon that is not intended to be used as a weapon.

*(See Section J, Policy JICI of the BHRSD Policy Book for more information)*

## **WELLNESS POLICY**

It is the goal of Berkshire Hills Regional School District (BHRSD) for every student to have the necessary skills and knowledge to actualize healthy and satisfying lives. We believe that wellness is a multi-faceted concept that is best learned through practice and from modeling of healthy behaviors by adults in the school, family and community. We define wellness as a

condition of health that is the result of proper nutrition, exercise and other personal habits that contribute to a sound mind and body. Therefore it is the policy of BHRSD to ensure that each student has equitable access to programs, activities and classes that promote physical, social-emotional and mental wellbeing. These programs will be consistent with, but not limited by the Massachusetts Department of Education (MA DOE) Health curriculum frameworks for content ([www.mass.edu/frameworks](http://www.mass.edu/frameworks)) and the National Health & Physical Education Standards for skills ([www.educationworld.com/standards/national](http://www.educationworld.com/standards/national)).

### Wellness Committee

BHRSD will establish a Wellness Committee that should involve parents, students, nurse, Food Service Director, school committee member, health teacher, physical education teacher, school administrator, members of the public, and other community members as appropriate. The Wellness Committee will enact a plan, to be approved by the Superintendent, to oversee implementation and evaluation of the Wellness Policy.

### Nutrition Guidelines

It is the policy of the school district that all foods and beverages made available on campus during the school day are consistent with School Lunch Program nutrition guidelines.

Guidelines for reimbursable school meals will not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to law. The district will:

- Establish separate guidelines for foods and beverages in the following categories:
  - foods and beverages included in a la carte sales in the food service program on school campuses
  - foods and beverages sold in vending machines, snack bars, school stores and concession stands
  - foods and beverages sold as part of school-sponsored fundraising activities
  - refreshments served at parties, celebrations and meetings during the school day
  - specify that its guidelines will be based on nutrition goals, not profit motives
- Participate, to the maximum extent possible, in federal school meals programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program – [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov)).
  - Provide to all children who participate in subsidized food programs the ability to obtain food in a non-stigmatizing manner.
  - Provide students with access to a variety of affordable nutritious, appealing and fresh foods that meet and exceed health and nutritional needs of students as outlined by the Nutrition Standards and U.S. Dietary Guidelines. ([www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/dga](http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/dga))
  - Develop guidelines for maximizing nutritional value by decreasing fat and added sugars, increasing nutrition density and moderating portion size of each individual food or beverage sold within the school environment.

- Provide adequate time, with a minimum of 20 minutes sit down time, for students to eat lunch at appropriate times, no earlier than 10:45 and no later than 1:00 pm, in the school schedule in clean, safe, and pleasant settings.
- Refrain from using food as a reward/ punishment. This is not meant to exclude foods for celebration and special events.

### Nutrition and Physical Education

The school district will provide nutrition education and physical education aligned with the standards established by the MA DOE.

### Nutrition Education

- Provide sequential, interdisciplinary nutritional education to foster healthy lifelong habits and promote comprehensive wellness learning in each grade from pre-K to12.
- Enhance nutrition education using locally grown foods whenever possible
- Promote regional partnerships between health agencies, health education resources, food suppliers, school meal programs, and other community resources.
- Send consistent nutrition messages from all aspects of the school program to student and families.
- Encourage parents/guardians to support healthy food choices and habits for their children.

### Physical Education Activities

- Provide sequential, interdisciplinary physical education to foster healthy lifelong habits and promote comprehensive wellness learning in each grade from pre-K to12.
- Refrain from using the denial and the imposition of physical activity as a punishment in all school related activities.
- Give students opportunities for daily physical activity during the school day through physical education (PE) classes, daily recess periods for elementary school students, and the integration of physical activity into the academic curriculum where appropriate.
- Provide opportunities for physical activity through a range of before- and/or after-school programs including, but not limited to, intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs.
- Provide opportunities, encouragement and support for all preK-12 students to be physically active on a daily basis and achieve the recommended health-related physical fitness standards.
- Design curriculum that promotes the acquisition of lifelong physical activities, i.e. walking programs, cross-country skiing.
- Encourage parents and guardians to support their children's participation in physical activity, to be physically active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.

### Social/Emotional Activities

- Students will be provided sequential, interdisciplinary social-emotional education to foster healthy lifelong habits and promote comprehensive wellness learning in each grade from pre-K to 12.
- Students will understand the benefit of adequate sleep as it relates to readiness for learning and overall health and will learn to identify patterns of behavior that promote healthy sleep cycles, including types and timing of activities prior to sleep and nutritional relationships to sleep.
- Students shall learn to define relaxation and be able to understand its relationship to overall health and well-being. Additionally, students will be able to identify what type(s) of activities may encourage relaxation and will learn methods for promoting it in their own lives.

### Other Wellness Activities

- Communication with parents/guardians, staff and students is essential. We will seek opportunities, to educate the school community on trends and information related to health and wellness. We will encourage community partnerships that assist the district in this effort.
- We will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing district-wide nutrition, nutrition education, physical activity and social-emotional programs and policies and other wellness initiatives.
- We will consider and implement when appropriate, environmentally-friendly practices such as the use of locally grown and seasonal foods, school gardens, recycling and composting.
- We will consider and implement when appropriate, physical activities and/or nutrition services or programs designed to benefit staff health.

### Evaluation:

The Superintendent, Director of Food Services and Building Administration are charged with operational responsibility for ensuring the district meets the BHRSD Wellness Policy (ADF). The Wellness Committee will report annually to the BHRSD Superintendent, who will submit the report to the School Committee.

Leg Ref: Section 204 of Public Law 108-265 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act 2004



BERKSHIRE HILLS REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Great Barrington Stockbridge West Stockbridge

July 2015

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

The Federal *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 (also known as NCLB) requires that all school districts receiving Title 1 funding must notify parents of the right to know about the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct their child(ren). The specifics of the law are as follows.

- ❖ Parents/Guardians have the right to request information about the professional qualifications of the classroom teacher
  - Whether a teacher has met State qualifications and licensing criteria at the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher is providing instruction
  - Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency license or waiver.
  - The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certifications or degrees held by the teacher, and the field or discipline of the certification or degree.
  - And, whether the child is provided services by a paraprofessional, and if so, his/her qualifications.
- ❖ Parents also have the right to know if their child is taught by a teacher for four or more weeks who is not “highly qualified” (a term that is specifically defined by NCLB to mean that a teacher must be certified in the area in which he/she is teaching). This notification will come directly from the school to all parents whose children are impacted by this decision.

Berkshire Hills Regional School District is committed to providing quality instruction for all students and does so by employing the most qualified individuals to teach and support each student in the classroom. If you would like to receive any of the information listed above for your child’s teacher, please contact the building principal. If you have additional questions regarding NCLB, please do not hesitate to call the building principal.

Sincerely,

*Joshua Briggs*

Director of Learning and Teaching

## DISTRIBUTION OF MEDICINE LETTER

July 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians:

We would like to inform you of the policies that have been put in place to ensure the health and safety of children needing medication during the school day.

Our school district requires that the following forms must be on file in your child's health record before we begin to give any medicine (including over the counter medications) at school:

1. Signed consent by the parent or guardian to give the medicine. Please complete the enclosed consent form and give it to your school nurse;
2. Signed medication order. The written medication order form should be taken to your child's licensed prescriber (your child's physician, nurse practitioner, etc.) for completion and returned to the school nurse. This order must be renewed as needed and at the beginning of each academic year.

Medicines should be delivered to the school in a pharmacy or manufacture-labeled container by you or a responsible adult whom you designate. Please ask your pharmacy to provide separate bottles for school and home. No more than a thirty day supply of the medicine should be delivered to the school. The number of doses will be verified in writing by school staff at time of delivery.

When your child needs a medicine to be given during the school day, please act quickly to follow these policies so we may begin to give the medicine as soon as possible. Thank you for your help.

Rebecca Donovan, RN

*(See Section J, Policy JLCD-E of the BHRSD Policy Book)(This is an example of a letter you will have to sign to allow the school to dispense medications.)*



BERKSHIRE HILLS REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

GREAT BARRINGTON • STOCKBRIDGE • WEST STOCKBRIDGE

50 MAIN STREET • P.O. BOX 617 • STOCKBRIDGE, MA 01262 • (413) 298-4017

Dear Parent,

Recently, some changes were made in the regulations dealing with student records. As you know, in cases where parents have divorced or separated, there are different rules set by the state for which parent can see and get copies of his/her child's student records. The parent(s) who have physical custody, as identified in the custody agreement or order, has the right to see and get copies of his/her child's student records with no limitation. However, the parent who does not have physical custody of the child (non-custodial parent), even if he/she has legal custody or visitation rights, may or may not have access to his/her child's student records.

A non-custodial parent is eligible to see and get copies of his/her child's student records unless the school or district has been given documentation that:

1. the non-custodial parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent, or
2. the non-custodial parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation, or
3. the non-custodial parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order.

It is necessary for divorced or separated parents to submit a copy of the custody agreement or order so that the school system may identify which of the parents has physical custody of the child, and then to determine if one of the conditions above exists. The non-custodial parent must request in writing that he/she be permitted to look at or copy his/her child's student records. However, the school can allow the non-custodial parent to have access to the child's records only after the school has notified the custodial parent and twenty-one (21) days has elapsed from this notification. During that twenty-one day period, the custodial parent can obtain a court order restricting access to the child's records or can submit a copy of any outstanding protective orders; if such orders are provided to the school system, then the school cannot release records.

Very truly yours,  
Peter Dillon, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

# BERKSHIRE HILLS REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

2016 - 2017 Calendar

**July, 2016**

0 Instructional Days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Payroll #
					H	2	Floating Holiday - Fiscal Yr. Staff
3	H	5	6	7	8	9	Holiday - Ind. Day Pay#1
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	Pay #2
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	SC Meeting
31							

**August, 2016**

1 Instructional Days / 3 Staff Day

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Payroll #
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Pay #3
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Pay #4/SC Meeting
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	8/29 & 8/30 All Day PD
28	PD	PD	31				8/31 - 1st day All Students

**September, 2016**

21 Instructional / 21 Staff Days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Payroll #
				1	2	3	Pay #5 / SC Meeting
4	H	6	7	8	9	10	Holiday - Labor Day
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Pay #6 / SC Meeting
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	in service
25	26	27	28	29	30		Pay #7/ SC Meet & Confer

**October, 2016**

20 Instructional Days / 20 Staff Days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Payroll #
						1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Rosh Hashana 10/2-10/4
9	H	11	12	13	14	15	Pay #8-Col. Day/Yom Kippur 10/11-10/12
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	10/13 SC Meeting 10/21 - in service
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	Pay #9 / SC Meeting
30	31						

**November, 2016**

17 Instructional / 18 Staff Days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Payroll #
		1	2	3	4	5	11/8 - All Day- Prof Dev.
6	7	PD	9	10	H	12	Pay #10-Veteran's Day/ SC Meeting
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	H	H	26	Pay #11-Thkgv. Break
27	28	29	30				

**December, 2016**

17 Instructional / 17 Staff Days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Payroll #
				1	2	3	SC Meeting
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	in service - Pay #12
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	SC Meet & Confer
18	19	20	21	22	23	H	1/2 day-Pay #13 Chr. Eve - Hanukkah
H	H	H	28	29	30	31	Christmas Day (12/27 in lieu of 12/24)

School Not In Session - Buildings Closed

Offices Open - No School

8/31/2016 - First Day of Classes - All Students

full day staff in-service

1/2 day inservice

indicates Payroll

indicates 1/2 day of school

**January, 2017**

20 Instructional / 20 Staff Days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Payroll #
H	H	3	4	5	6	7	Pay #14 - New Yr.Day/ SC Meeting
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	H	17	18	19	20	21	Pay #15 - MLK / SC Meeting
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	in service
29	30	31					

**February, 2017**

15 Instructional / 15 Staff Days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Payroll #
			1	2	3	4	Pay #16 / SC Meeting
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Joint Meeting w/ towns
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Pay #17/ SC Meeting
19	H	21	22	23	24	25	Presidents' Day - February Break
26	27	28					

**March, 2017**

22 Instructional / 23 Staff Days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Payroll #
			1	2	3	4	Pay #18 / SC Meeting
5	6	7	8	9	PD	11	3/10 -All Day Prof Dev./ SC Meeting
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Pay #19
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	in service / SC Meet & Confer
26	27	28	29	30	31		Pay #20

**April, 2017**

14 Instructional / 14 Staff Days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Payroll #
						1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13	H	15	Pay #21 - Good Friday / SC Meeting
16	H	18	19	20	21	22	Patriots Day- April Break
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	Pay #22
30							

**May, 2017**

22 Instructional / 22 Staff Days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Payroll #
		1	2	3	4	5	in service / SC Meeting
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Pay #23
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	SC Meet & Confer
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	Pay #24
28	H	30	31				Memorial Day

**June, 2017**

11 Instructional / 11 Staff Days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Payroll #
				1	2	3	SC Meeting
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pay #25
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	SC Meet & Confer
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Pay #26
25	26	27	28	29	30		

Earliest Last Day - June 15, 2017 1/2 day - (Student's 180th Day/Staff - 184 days)

June 22, 2017 1/2 day (If 5 snowdays are used)

school committee meetings

school committee meetings - meet & confer

**September 1, 2016 will be the first payroll of 2016-2017  
for all Current Unit A, Extended School Year and School Year Staff**