

Serving Pre-K  
through  
Eighth Grade

# Hinkletown MENNONITE SCHOOL

## ***HMS Parent Handbook***

***Hinkletown Mennonite School  
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*This handbook can be found on the HMS website at [www.hmsk8.org](http://www.hmsk8.org) under the parent page link. Forms and documents referenced in the handbook are also located under the parent page link.*

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## Introduction

On behalf of the HMS teaching and support staff, welcome! It is our goal to provide a quality Christian education for your children and help them grow as they find their place in God's plan. Schools are most effective when parents and the school staff are partners. We look forward to this venture with you.

One of our primary goals is to keep you informed about the progress of your children. This booklet is just one source of information. It was designed to provide answers to the questions you may have about the program and to direct you to the best source of additional information.

I recommend that you read the entire handbook carefully and discuss its content with your children. If you have any questions or suggestions for future editions of this publication, please contact the office staff at [office@hmsk8.org](mailto:office@hmsk8.org) or me directly.

Our prayer as a school is that your child and family have a successful and enjoyable school year.

In Christ's service,

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# STATEMENTS THAT GUIDE OUR PROGRAM

## Vision Statement

We want to see: *Students learning and living God's purposes.*

## Mission Statement

Education at HMS:

- ◆ Inspires students to be life-long learners
- ◆ Integrates Christ's teachings and Anabaptist values of peacemaking, service, and community into everyday learning
- ◆ Shapes a Christ-centered worldview
- ◆ Develops each student's God-given gifts
- ◆ Adapts holistic instruction to meet the needs of each student.

## Core Values

Hinkletown Mennonite School provides a quality education within the context of an Anabaptist interpretation of the Christian faith for students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. This is a Christ-centered school community where students are called to acknowledge Jesus' presence in their lives. Jesus is the center of life, the world, creation, and all learning. As a supportive school community, we:

### 1) Emphasize experiencing God's presence as

- Students are encouraged to develop a personal relationship with Christ
- Students are taught Anabaptist values and to respect the beliefs of all families in the school community
- Each person is called to model Christ's love in their daily life
- The school community places Christ at the center of all learning

### 2) Nurture the spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical development of all learners as

- Students discover an awareness of their spiritual gifts and God's unique plan for their lives
- Students make a personal connection between classroom learning and everyday life
- Students receive a well-rounded education resulting from high quality instruction
- Teachers integrate faith and knowledge to encourage students to become lifelong disciples of Christ
- Parents and teachers reinforce a faith-based education by supporting each other through a team effort

### 3) Believe each person is both a learner and a teacher as

- Students learn from and teach other students as well as adults in the school community
- Teachers learn through professional development and their interactions with students and parents
- Parents teach and learn while sharing their gifts with students and teachers

**4) Provide opportunities for individuals to discover their unique interests and develop their natural talents as**

- Students explore their emerging interests in core academics, the fine arts, and sports
- Students relate to Christian friends, teachers, and organizations
- Students of all ability levels are given the resources they need to grow
- Students learn to meet other's needs in the school and the wider community as modeled by parents and teachers

**5) Encourage students to be reflective, caring, and responsible servants for Christ in the global community by working together to be**

- A Christ-centered community where the Bible and prayer guide our daily lives and actions
- A mentoring community where students learn from their peers and the generations that preceded them
- A caring community where students, parents, and teachers respect, trust, and nurture each other in the faith
- A reflective community that calls for stewardship of God's creation and empathy for people around the world
- A life-giving community where we strive for hope, peace, and justice at school and in the world
- A redemptive community that resolves conflict and restores relationships according to biblical principles
- A compassionate community where students are free to express themselves as they grow within the framework of a faith community

*approved: 5/12/05*

## Educational Philosophy

At Hinkletown Mennonite School we believe in the "*Confession of Faith from an Mennonite Perspective*" as stated in the school by-laws. This statement includes a belief in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, the nature of divine revelation, the purpose of the church in the world, and our relation to the world as Christians. A more specific philosophy regarding our belief about the process of education is as follows:

*The philosophy of education at Hinkletown Mennonite School reflects two major considerations. First, we view what we do as one part of a child's life under the larger plan of God's Kingdom on earth. Therefore, in every part of our planning, motivation, and actions, we view ourselves and the children as part of God's plan and purpose. Second, we believe we have the responsibility to provide an education that will help children acquire values and skills that will make their lives full and purposeful, ultimately leading to a commitment to Christ and service in His Kingdom.*

*The curriculum is framed in the belief that each child has developmental needs that must be considered in planning for his/her learning: i.e. learning in orderly sequences, moving from concrete to abstract, building on what is already learned. Because God has planted in each child the desire to learn and a curiosity about his/her environment, in our curriculum we place high value on students' active involvement in the learning process.*

### How Children Learn

Children are individuals created by God. Each one is unique and precious to us as parents and teachers and to God as part of His creative act. God has planted in each child the desire to learn and a curiosity about his/her environment. Each child has developmental needs that must be considered in planning for his/her learning: i.e. learning in orderly sequences, moving from concrete to abstract, building on what is already learned.

A child's learning is maximized when his/her particular learning style is respected. All aspects of development are interrelated and must be considered in creating a learning environment. Learning is most effective when home and school work as a partnership to ensure that the child's basic needs are met. Children learn by experiencing success, whereas frustration and failure tend to reduce the desire to learn and lead to a negative self-concept. Learning that is intrinsically motivated (generated from within) is more lasting than learning that is extrinsically motivated (forced on from outside).

The teacher is responsible for planning experiences that are appropriate for the learning needs of each child. The role of the teacher needs to be that of a mediator between what the child is supposed to learn and what he or she wants to learn. By being sensitive as a Christian and skillful as a teacher (facilitator, manager or instructor) the teacher will help children value their uniqueness and the uniqueness of others (we all need each other. I Cor. 12).

### How Children Are Taught

#### Educational Objectives:

- Students will experience a variety of learning activities and tasks such as manipulating materials, going on field trips, participating in class activities and being exposed to various media.
- Students will be encouraged to strive for academic excellence according to their individual potential.
- Students will be given opportunities to explore directed topics as well as topics of their individual interest.

- Students will develop a healthy self-concept by becoming aware of their worth as a special part of God's creation.
- Students will be provided with an environment in which they will see the importance of making the decision to commit their lives to Christ.
- Students will develop understanding and appreciation of all persons, (including those who belong to different social, cultural, and ethnic groups.) through resource persons, assemblies, and special projects.
- Students will be encouraged to develop good study skills that will assist them in their individual learning programs.
- Students will develop a desire to learn and begin to realize that learning is a lifelong process.

It is our belief that children need to learn a sense of God's place in their lives and ultimately Christ's purpose for them as individuals. We also want children to look on life and service with anticipation and excitement. Children need to have the important reading, writing, speaking, listening, and math skills to deal with their world. We believe that learning specific information is not as important in the long run as is developing the skill of learning independently. In addition, we believe it is important for children to be able to organize new information with larger concepts. In the process of becoming a caring and helping Christian, the child needs to learn the aesthetic (beautiful) and orderly nature of God's creation.

## **What Children Are Taught**

### Educational Objectives

Students will:

- Develop knowledge of the Bible and be able to apply Biblical principles to their daily lives
- Develop an appreciation of Anabaptist beliefs and Christian discipleship
- View the world with a global perspective
- Value the importance of Christian service
- Develop core skills in language arts (listening, speaking, reading, writing)
- Develop core skills in mathematics (computation and problem solving)
- Develop an understanding of and stewardship for God's creation through science
- Learn to appreciate culture, beauty, and develop their creativity through the fine arts core
- Grow in physical and emotional health and stability
- Develop critical thinking skills that will enable them to be responsible world citizens

# SCHOOL DAY ITINERARY AND PROCEDURES

## Daily School Schedule

7:30 - 7:45 am	Faculty Devotions
8:10 - 8:20 am	Buses arrive at HMS
8:20 am	Official school day start time for grades K – 8
9:00 am	Pre-K class start time
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Lunch/Recess Hour (times may vary slightly for different classes)
12:00 noon	Pre-K morning class dismissed
2:40 pm	Pre-K extended day dismissal time
2:50 - 3:00 pm	Grades K-8 dismissal time

## Alternative Start and Dismissal Times

Early Dismissals*	11:40 am
2-hour Delays	10:20 am start time

\* *Pre-planned early dismissals are noted on the school calendar and occur on our first day of school, Benefit Auction Friday in October, report card workdays near the end of each trimester, parent-teacher conferences and usually the last two days of the school year.*

## Attendance Policy and Procedures

According to the Pennsylvania School District Code, all children between the ages of eight and sixteen are required to attend school. Regular attendance at school is needed for your child to experience academic success. It is the parent's responsibility to know and account for a child's absentee record. HMS will use the following guidelines:

### ABSENCES

- Absences are deemed excused or unexcused depending on the reason for the absence and if the proper procedures are followed to request an excuse from the principal.
- **Excused absences** can include such reasons as illness, death of a family member, medical or dental appointments, authorized school activities and educational travel with prior approval. One day of hunting will also be excused per year.
- **Unexcused absences** include such situations as parental neglect to get the child to school, visiting, oversleeping, missing the bus, staying home to work, and unapproved trips.
- Excuse notes or trip request forms are needed to request an absence to be counted excused (see *EXCUSE NOTES* and *Family Trips* below).
- The principal reserves the right to deny an excuse request based on the student's attendance record or the reason for the request.
- Students are allowed three (3) unexcused absences per year.

- Two (2) half-day absences are counted as one (1) full-day absence.
- After five (5) unplanned, consecutive absences, a doctor's note is required.
- When ten (10) accumulated absences have been reached, a notice will be sent to parents and a parent meeting may be scheduled.
- HMS is required to report any student to the school district when he/she has accumulated fifteen (15) absences, whether excused or unexcused. The district may take further action, including legal means to improve student attendance.
- After fifteen (15) days of cumulative, excused absences (excluding approved trip requests), a doctor's note is required for future absences. Without a doctor's note, any further absences will be marked unexcused.

### **TARDIES OR EARLY PICK-UPS**

- Tardies are recorded when a student is present for a partial day of school less than half a day.
- Tardies are not accumulated to count for absences.
- The school may contact parents when a student has a high number of tardies.
- Students who arrive late to school on an HMS bus that experienced delays in getting to school will not be marked tardy.
- Being late to school because a student missed the bus will be marked as a tardy.
- Tardies and early pick-ups require an excuse note.
- Parents who sign their child in/out at the office for a late arrival or early pick-up do not need to complete a separate excuse note as the sign-in/out sheet serves that purpose.
- If a student is sent home due to illness, parents should just sign-out the student at the office at the pick-up time. They do not need to present an excuse note for that day's illness.

### **EXCUSE NOTES**

- are required for any absence (full or half-day) or any late arrival or early pick-up (tardy).
- must give the name of the student, the date of the note, the date(s) of the absence(s) and the reason for the absence or tardy.
- can be submitted the following format: a handwritten note signed by the parent, an email from the parent's email account, a signed school excuse note (available on the school website's parent page).
- Phone calls are appreciated to let the office know if a student will not be at school, but phone calls cannot constitute a legal excuse note for a student.
- Students who are absent from school must return an excuse note signed by the parent/guardian within five (5) calendar days of the absence.
- If an excuse note is not received within five (5) days, a reminder note will be sent home.
- If an excuse note is not received within ten (10) days, the absence will be marked unexcused.

## ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Attendance records account for how long a student has been at school. Notations include the following:

- Absent – excused
- Absent – unexcused
- Half-day (*if arrive late or leave early anytime between the hours of 10:20 and 12:50*)
- Tardy – AM (*if arrive to school late between 8:21 and 10:20 am*)
- Early Pick-up – PM (*if leave school early between 12:51 and 2:49*)

## Trip Requests

Family trips during the school year can be great learning experiences and at times are necessary. However, parents should be aware that it can negatively affect a student's academic progress and make it difficult for teachers to find assignments to replace what a student has missed in lessons and classroom activities.

Family trips can be marked as a legal absence if a trip request form is completed by parents and approved by the principal. Please note the following expectations:

1. Pre-planned absences for which parents want to request an excuse, or absences that will extend for three (3) or more days require a trip request form
2. Parents must submit a completed **trip request form** at least five (5) school days prior to the trip to the school office for the trip to be counted as an excused absence. This allows teachers reasonable notice to prepare assignments for students to complete while they are absent. Bus drivers can also have time to review and adjust their routes as needed. Click on the *Handbook Forms* link on the HMS web site or contact the school office for a *Trip Request Form*.
3. Parents are encouraged to limit family travel to up to five (5) days per year.
4. State educational objectives for the trip on the trip request form.
5. It is the student's responsibility to request assignments from their teachers at least three (3) days prior to their trip.
6. Students must return all assigned work the day they return to school. Incomplete work may be counted against students' grades.
7. The principal reserves the right to not excuse any family trip plans that exceed five (5) days per year.

## Required Evening Attendance

Because we emphasize community, hands-on learning and the performing arts in our HMS programming, there are a few evening events that students are required to attend in addition to their daily attendance. Students and/or parents must notify their teachers if their child will not be able to attend. The absence could affect the student's academic grade depending on the student's grade-level.

These events are noted on the school calendar, which is distributed in May for the following year. Please mark school events on your personal calendars.

- Christmas program (Pre-K – grade 8)
- MS dinner theater (grades 6 - 8)
- Academic Fair (Kindergarten – grade 8)
- Fine Arts Program (Kindergarten – grade 8)

## Dress Code

HMS has a dress code that we have agreed upon as a school community. The *dress code policy* below was approved by the HMS board of directors:

*“Dress and personal appearance is a personal matter. It reflects our attitudes toward ourselves, other people and God. We respect the ability and authority of Christian parents to make decisions with respect to dress. We believe that all clothing should be clean, respectful, and of modest length and design.”*

Students are asked to be discreet and considerate of the many different groups represented in our school community. Additionally, HMS parents and staff members are asked to make sure their students are following the specific guidelines listed below which apply to school days as well as when participating in any public programs associated with the school:

### DRESS CODE GUIDELINES

1. Loose-fitting jeans and slacks are appropriate to wear at HMS. Leggings may not be worn as pants alone but may be worn under a long sweater or skirt.
2. Dresses and shorts are acceptable if they are no more than two inches above the knee.
3. No halter tops, spaghetti straps, tank tops, or muscle shirts. No midriiffs or cleavage may be exposed *in movements common to everyday activities*.
4. Messages on clothing must be acceptable, not representing anything that is contrary to Anabaptist Christian beliefs, practice or values.
5. Students should be well groomed.
6. Students should be dressed appropriately for the weather including clothing to cover their arms and legs during sub-freezing temperatures.

## **DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS**

One warning will be given if the dress code policy is violated and students may be asked to wear sweat pants or shirts provided by the office for that school day. Parents will be called to drop off appropriate clothing or pick up students for a second offense during any given school year.

## **Field Trip And Extra Curricular Activities**

The school makes it possible for students to participate in extra-curricular activities. Some of these activities require transportation. When parents or staff members provide transportation in their own vehicles, it is expected that these basic rules will be followed:

- Drivers must be age 18 or older and must have a copy of their insurance and driver's license on file in the HMS office.
- Passengers will keep the noise at a conversational level and be polite
- All students must wear seat belts at all times (PA law)
- Students under 8 must ride in a child restraint seat as designated by state law
- Students under age 12 must ride in the back seat if vehicles have passenger seat air bags (PA law)

## **Lunches**

Students eat in their classrooms. Most days students are expected to have a packed lunch. We ask that parents provide healthy, nutritious foods for their child/children.

*Foods that are discouraged or not permitted:*

- Sodas, energy drinks or sugary drinks
- a lunch made up of only snack foods
- food from a fast food restaurant in your child's lunch

*The following can be purchased for lunch:*

- Milk - on a daily, weekly or yearly basis (order forms sent out in August mailing)
- PTF lunches – payable via an order form sent home at the beginning of each trimester. PTF provides a lunch once a week, usually on a Tuesday.
- Hot dogs – available Wednesdays to help support our sports program
- Pizza can be purchased for lunch on Friday. Order forms are sent home at the beginning of each trimester. The pizza lunch helps sponsor our international volunteer who comes to HMS through Mennonite Central Committee's exchange program (IVEP).

## Recess

Students are required to go outdoors for recess when the weather is suitable. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for recess on cold days.

- HMS has grade-level restrictions for outdoor recess depending on weather conditions. Feel free to contact your child's teacher if you have questions about this.
- If a student should not be outdoors for a physical reason, please send a note stating the reason to the teacher.
- A doctor's written statement may be required if there are limitations on a student's ability to participate in recess.

**Parents are encouraged to volunteer to help with recess.** Contact your son/daughter's teacher if interested. Parents who volunteer need child abuse and criminal record clearances on file at the office. Check at the front desk if you need application forms.

# TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

## Bus Transportation

HMS owns and operates its own fleet of buses that provides transportation to and from school each day for students in grades K-8 students. Each pupil will be assigned to a bus route before the beginning of the school year.

**BUS LISTS** - are sent out in the August mailing and include the names and contact numbers for the driver and each family on the bus route.

**BUS ROUTES AND STOPS** - are established by the Transportation Committee in June and July of each year. Unless parents inform the office otherwise, their bus stop will be set at or near to the family's home address. For liability reasons, the bus stops must be approved by the HMS School Board in August. Once those stops are approved, changes are not allowed without special permission from the school administrator.

**SPECIAL REQUESTS** - Parents should make any special requests of stops other than their home address by July 1 of each year. Also, due to issues of liability, buses may not deviate from their scheduled route to deliver students to a different location. Parents may request a different drop-off point during the school year only if it is along an existing route or it is already an existing stop on an HMS route.

**BUS NOTES** - are important communication pieces. Bus notes enable parents to request that students ride home on a different bus on specified days, notify the school that children will not be on the bus at all in the morning or afternoon, or give details for alternate transportation arrangements. Parents can either write a note or fill in a bus note form provided at the front desk or on the HMS website.

**FOR MORNING CHANGE REQUESTS:** Parents should send a bus note to the office by the day before. If the change is unexpected, parents can notify their driver by 6:30 am that morning. Contact numbers for each driver are noted on the bus lists.

**FOR AFTERNOON CHANGE REQUESTS:** Children should deliver these notes to their classroom/homeroom teacher upon arrival in the morning, or parents can deliver them directly to the office. If parents fail to send bus notes with their son/daughter in the morning, they can request a change in transportation in the afternoon by notifying the office BY NOON in an email or phone call.

Bus transportation is a privilege that requires students follow the bus rules to ensure safe and pleasant experience for all passengers. Inappropriate behavior on the bus will result in disciplinary action. Maintaining order on school buses requires the cooperation of students, parents, teachers, the principal, and bus drivers.

Questions or concerns about transportation should be referred to the school administrator/principal. Bus rules can be found in Appendix G.

## **PROCEDURES FOR BOARDING BUSES**

Students are to board the bus only at the designated bus stops unless other arrangements are made with the office. Students must be ready to board the bus five to ten (5-10) minutes before the scheduled pick-up time.

Pupils should wait for their bus at a reasonable and safe distance from the edge of the road and should not move forward until the bus has stopped completely and the door opens. Students who cross a road to board their bus must wait for the driver to direct them AND CHECK TRAFFIC IN BOTH DIRECTIONS THEMSELVES before walking onto the road.

It cannot be assumed that it is safe to cross even though the red lights are flashing. Pupils must walk IN FRONT of the bus at a distance where they are completely visible (approximately 10 feet) to the driver when they cross the highway.

Students must not damage or deface any part of the bus and will be held financially liable for any damage. Pupils must keep the aisle and emergency door open for free access at all times.

## **BUS RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Bus drivers must assign students a regular seat (state law). Disciplinary action must be taken for misbehavior on buses. The bus drivers may issue warnings and take back privileges. The principal may issue warnings and take back privileges (including riding privileges for a specified period of time).

Students will be cited for the following rule infractions:

- Standing up or kneeling on a seat
- Extending body parts into bus aisle or outside the bus window
- Changing seats
- Excessive noise
- Littering
- Name calling or teasing
- Harassing students (see HMS harassment policy and procedures in Appendix D)
- Disobeying driver and not following a bus driver request the first time given
- Inappropriate language
- Destruction of property

### **Bus Driver's Action:**

- The driver will speak to the child about his/her behavior
- Inform him/her that a written bus referral will be given to the principal
- The driver may move the child to another seat

### **Principal's Action:**

- Reminder of expected behavior
- Parent contact
- Loss of bus privileges
- In the case of a serious offense (a threat to the health or safety of an individual), appropriate action will be taken by the bus driver and/or principal without warning.

## **Car Transportation**

### **Daytime Parking and Bus Zone Area**

Parking spaces are reserved near the front doors of the school for parents to use throughout the day. The front drive is NOT to be used as a parking area, only for quick drop-offs.

### **Parent Pick-up Line**

The parent pick-up line is a single file line that starts at the main front entrance. To ensure student safety, students should be dismissed to cars directly in front of the entrance, not to cars parked in the parking lot. Any student who needs to walk between cars in the line should be accompanied by an adult. Pre-K parents are given first priority in line on Tuesday and Thursdays when the extended day students dismiss at 2:40 pm.

### **Parents Dropping-Off Students**

- **REGULAR ARRIVALS FOR GRADES K-8:** The morning drop-off time and location for students in grades K-8 is between 8:10 – 8:20 am at the main front entrance of the school. Parents should drive up to the entrance where a faculty or staff person will be standing to open the door for students.
- **PRE-K REGULAR ARRIVALS:** Pre-K students should be dropped off at the Early Childhood entrance between 8:50 and 9:00 am. If arriving with a 2-hour delay, pre-k students should be dropped off at the main front entrance.

### **Parents Picking-Up Students**

- **PRE-K NOON DISMISSAL:** Parent pick-up happens at the main front entrance at a noon.
- **PRE-K EXTENDED DAY DISMISSAL:** On Tuesdays and Thursdays, pre-k extended day students are dismissed at 2:40 pm at the main front entrance. Pre-K parents should be given priority in the pick-up line.
- **REGULAR DISMISSALS:** Students in grades K – 8 who are to be picked-up by their parents will be dismissed at 2:50 pm to the front entrance. They will wait there with a teacher supervisor until their parent pulls up at the door.

### **Early Drop-Off**

Students should arrive at school between 8:10-8:20 am unless scheduled school activities require otherwise. Students may not be dropped off at school before 8:00 am unless office staff grant permission. Contact the office if this is needed. Students who arrive by car before 8:10 am must remain in the main lobby until 8:10 am.

### **Early Pick-Up**

If a student is to be picked up early for an appointment, a note signed by the parent/guardian must be given to his/her teacher the morning of the appointment. Parents should park and enter the front entrance for early pick-ups. Students will meet their parents at the front desk where the parent must sign-out his/her child before leaving.

### **Late Arrivals**

Students who are tardy for any reason must be dropped-off at the front lobby doors and sign-in at the front desk.

### **Late Pick-Up**

Any student who has not been picked up by 3:00 pm will remain in the front office lobby to wait and can be picked up at the front doors.

If your child is staying after for a sports event or another extra-curricular event, please be sure to be at the school by the designated pick-up time. Failure to do so is an inconvenience to the person in charge. If you are running late because of an emergency, please let the office know as soon as possible so we can have someone designated to be responsible to watch your child until you arrive.

# COMMUNICATIONS

*HMS strives to maintain quality communication between parents and teachers and parents and general school information from the office. Please see Appendix F for our standards and expectations for communication. If at any time you feel the school is delinquent or has inadequate communication with patron families, please contact the office staff or school administrator.*

## Backpack Mail & Newsletters

While an increasing amount of school communication happens electronically, via our school website or email, some paper mailings are also sent home as “backpack mail.” The oldest child enrolled at HMS is assumed to be the family mail carrier unless parents request an alternate sibling. If families do not have email, they should notify the office so that copies of electronic communication can be sent via backpack mail.

The school newsletter, *Newslink*, is published bi-weekly August through May and includes pertinent information about upcoming events, announcements, and articles that give parents a view of school life. This newsletter is sent via email and can also be found on the school website. Families can request that NewsLink be sent to multiple email addresses. Contact the office staff to have additional email addresses included in the distribution list.

A second publication, *Handprints*, is published three times a year and is distributed to friends of HMS, alumni, local churches, and grandparents, as well as patron families. *Handprints* highlights feature stories about school events, students, patron families and alumni updates. *Handprints* is also posted on our website.

## Calendar of Events

The HMS school calendar is sent home each year in May. Calendar updates may be issued and will be sent home with students. You will also find a link to our school calendar located on the top header of our school website, [www.hmsk8.org](http://www.hmsk8.org). Announcements are also posted on the *Parent Page* link on the website and up-coming events are posted in our newsletters.

**REQUIRED ATTENDANCE:** Please mark school events on your personal calendars. There are some events that all students are required to attend. They include: **the Christmas program (Pre-K-8), Academic Fair (K-8), the MS dinner theater (Gr. 6-8), and Fine Arts Program (Gr. K-8).**

## Concerns, Issues and Questions

Concerns, issues, and questions are usually best handled if they are dealt with promptly and openly. If you have any questions regarding classroom procedures, program, or your child's progress, please contact the classroom teacher first. Parents can ask for a conference with teachers at any time. The principal is ready to assist in resolving issues as requested. A grievance procedure is outlined in Appendix A.

## Emergency Cards

An updated emergency card must be on file for every child to ensure that contact can be made with a responsible adult in the event of illness or injury. Please notify the school of any change in address, home or work telephone numbers, and medical information such as allergies, so that our information will always be accurate. It is imperative that parents identify several emergency contacts.

## Emergency Closings

If for any reason students need to be dismissed early, every effort will be made to contact parents to inform them of the dismissal time. Parents should discuss emergency arrangements with their child in the event that no one is home when he/she arrives. If school is cancelled in the early morning hours or dismissed early due to inclement weather, announcements will be made on:

- WDAC FM Radio 94.5
- WJTL FM Radio 90.3
- WGAL TV Channel 8

PRE-K: If there is a two-hour delay, parents have the option to bring their child at 10:20 am and have them stay until regular dismissal. The teacher will be in touch by email with details.

HMS generally follows the cancellations of Eastern Lancaster County, Cocalico and Ephrata Area School Districts. However, since HMS has its own bussing system that picks up students from their homes, there may be times that HMS will make a cancellation decision independent of the area districts. The primary determining factor is safety on the roads.

## Orientation Events

An orientation time will be scheduled for new families during the summer months. The first event of the school year is a back-to-school night and picnic for families where students can bring their school items, meet their teachers and learn a bit about their new classroom routines.

Middle school students have additional orientation days the first week of school that include fun community building activities as well as instructional times that introduce them to the expectations of a new program, the variety of co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, the organizational requirements for their team of teachers and how to follow a new type of schedule.

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences play an important line of communication between home and school. There are two pre-planned conference times, one in the Fall and one in the Spring, on the school calendar every year, but parents are welcome to call teachers or the principal to set up a time to meet any other time as well.

Parents are required to attend the Fall conferences which are held at the mid-term mark of the first trimester. Spring conferences are encouraged but not required unless requested by teachers. See the school calendar for dates.

Parents will be notified in NewsLink of when to call the office to schedule a conference.

## **Grievance Procedures**

The HMS grievance procedure uses the Biblical framework for resolving issues suggested in Mathew 18. The purpose of the grievance procedure is to provide a framework for settling misunderstandings or issues that involve parents and staff members in the school community.

It is the intention of this procedure to attain, at the lowest possible administrative level, in the shortest amount of time, solutions that bring restoration. Confidentiality is essential at all levels of this procedure for effective restoration. See the grievance procedure In Appendix A.

## **Parent Directories**

HMS provides a parent directory to each family, listing address, phone number, email address, student(s) names and grade levels and church affiliation. These directories are to be used for school related matters only. Please do not pass information on to third parties or use address/email addresses for personal profit.

## **Website**

The HMS web site ([www.hmsk8.org](http://www.hmsk8.org)) has information on the educational program that you can access online. Use it as your main source of information, forms, documents, or access to the HMS calendar of events.

## **Classroom Communications**

Classroom teachers may choose to send home classroom newsletters on a weekly or monthly basis. There are also class pages located on our website for general classroom information. Information may include upcoming events, class projects, long-range assignment documents, etc. It is not required that daily homework be posted on this site.

# STANDARDS OF DISCIPLINE

## Discipline And Rules

Parents and teachers work together to promote good behavior. It begins with proper training at home before a child enters school. A well-disciplined student will direct their interests, efforts, and abilities toward greater achievement. Those who are well disciplined often take advantage of opportunities offered in school and help create an environment conducive to learning.

Parents should expect to be informed of any discipline problem that is serious or persistent. Communication between all persons dealing with the discipline problem is vital for the issue to be dealt with effectively.

## Philosophy

Two major goals in a Christian school and a democratic society are to:

- Help children students learn self-discipline so they know how to act appropriately in a variety of social settings and situations.
- Apply discipline in a way that is restorative, building a sense of community as students learn to communicate, resolve conflict, and care for and serve others as modeled by teachers, support staff, and parents.

## Student Rights

Students have the right to due process, the right to an education, the right to express their opinions in an appropriate manner, and the right to be free from discrimination and harassment. In addition, students have the right to be treated with dignity by others members of the school community and the right to contribute to the educational program.

## Student Responsibilities

Students' responsibilities include school attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work and conformance to school rules and regulations. Students, teachers, and support staff share the responsibility to develop a school climate that encourages learning and living together as Christian sisters and brothers.

No student has the right to interfere with the education of other HMS students. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights of teachers, students, and support staff. Students should express their ideas and opinions in a respectful, constructive and polite way. It is the responsibility of students to conform to the following:

- Be aware of all rules and regulations for student behavior and follow them
- Volunteer information in matters relating to the health, safety and welfare of the school community and the protection of school property
- Dress and groom to meet standards of health/safety and to enhance rather than distract from the educational processes

- Cooperate with staff as they strive to provide a safe school environment for all
- Exercise proper care when using public facilities and equipment
- Attend school daily and be on time for all classes and school activities unless they have a legitimate reason otherwise
- Make up work as assigned by teachers when absent from school

## **Discipline**

When a student's action violates HMS behavior standards, fair and appropriate action will be taken to correct the problem and turn the situation into a learning experience for the student(s) involved. Consequences for inappropriate behavior may include:

- Reminder about expected behavior (see *Schoolwide Behavioral Expectations below*)
- Time-out or thinking time
- Apology for action
- Action plan to correct behavior
- Loss of privileges
- Conference with parent
- Exclusion from classes or school for a designated period of time
- Restorative Circle Conference (see *Discipline that is Restorative below*)

## **Schoolwide Behavioral Expectations**

The following are classroom and schoolwide standards for student behavior. These should be taught and reinforced as appropriate. Students should:

- Respect property rights and personal space of students and teachers
- Walk slowly and quietly in the classrooms and in hallways  
(elementary hallways=silent and middle school hallways= quiet voice)
- Respect ALL teachers, support staff, volunteers, and peers
- Be welcoming to all members of school community and our guests
- Be courteous and helpful when you interact with all adults and students
- Follow directions given by ALL teachers, support staff, and volunteers respectfully the first time they are given
- Talk with your classroom/homeroom teacher later if you do not feel a direction was appropriate. Exception: do not follow a direction that makes you feel is unsafe.

## **Discipline that is Restorative**

As an Anabaptist school, HMS is intent on both teaching and modeling conflict resolution skills that reflect peaceful practices and reinforce the values of being part of a community. Disciplinary actions include ways to help students see how their actions not only impact themselves, but also those around them. The restorative discipline model works toward resolution where a student must face consequences for misbehavior, but also must make things right with those around him/her, including parents, teachers and other students.

For more information about the Restorative Discipline model, see:  
<http://www.fixschooldiscipline.org/toolkit/educators/restorative/#>

# REGISTRATION

## Re-enrollment

Registration begins in February for the upcoming school year. The dates will be announced via backpack mail and NewsLink as well as posted on the school website. Parents are asked to complete a Family Re-enrollment Form which includes the Parent Covenant each year. Current families are guaranteed a placement if registered by March 1st.

## Pre-K or Kindergarten Registration

Children registering for Pre-K must be 4 years of age before September 1 and potty trained. Upon acceptance as a student, parents must submit a health summary form.

Children registering for kindergarten must be five years old before September 1 of that school year. Upon acceptance as a student, parents must present the student's immunization record. The immunizations needed are:

- Diphtheria and Tetanus - 4 properly spaced doses (one after fourth birthday)
- Polio - 3 properly spaced doses
- Mumps and Rubella - 1 dose given at 12 months or older
- Hepatitis B - 3 properly spaced doses
- Measles - 2 doses with first given at 12 months or older and second dose at least one month from the first

Immunization exemption forms are available upon request from the office. The school nurse must approve exemption requests.

## Registration Fees

The board sets the registration fee for students on an annual basis. Registration fees are required in order to process an application form or scholarship application. Registration fees are non-refundable should you choose not to send your child to HMS after you have already registered.

## Discounts

- Registration discounts are available for current families who register by March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- New family registration applications are processed starting on March 1<sup>st</sup>. New families are eligible for a discounted registration fee if paid by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## Tuition

HMS strives to make our excellent education affordable by seeking various ways to subsidize the cost. Tuition covers only about 2/3 of the total cost of education. Families at HMS depend on the generosity of many donors and fundraising efforts of the HMS community to raise the remaining funds.

## Delinquent Tuition

It is important that parents commit to paying their tuition on time so that HMS can pay its teachers and keep the doors open to our students.

Administration and the School Board monitors the family tuition accounts and will be in communication with families as necessary to follow-up on late payments. HMS asks families to be aware of the following expectations of communication regarding tuition payments:

1. If, for any reason, a family is unable to make a tuition payment, the family should contact the school administrator to give an explanation as soon as possible.
2. When a family is fifteen (15) days past due on their tuition payment and no communication has been received explaining why, the account will be assessed a 1% finance charge.
3. When a family is thirty (30) days past due on their tuition payment, they will be contacted by the school administrator to negotiate a payment schedule or ask the parent(s) to contact their church for assistance.
4. When a family is ninety (90) days past due on their tuition payment, they will be contacted by a School Board representative who may contact the family's church for assistance.
5. The issue will be brought to the school board for action if:
  - A satisfactory arrangement is not worked out between the family and the board representative.
  - The family fails to comply with the arrangements that were made.
6. A student will NOT be allowed to attend HMS if the previous year's tuition is outstanding. The board can grant special exceptions.
7. When an exception is granted by the School Board, a family with delinquent tuition must apply for tuition assistance if the student will attend HMS the following year.

## Tuition Payments

Each family must submit a signed payment plan. Payment options available are:

- 1 annual payment due August 15
- 2 bi-annual payments due on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of August and February
- 12 monthly payments due on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month (June-May)
- 10 monthly payments due on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month (August-May)
- Other arrangements made by contacting the school administrator.

## **Tuition Rates**

The School Board establishes tuition rates on a yearly basis. Standard tuition rates apply to all students admitted to the school.

## **Fees**

Additional fees may be charged to help cover additional costs of educating your child not covered by tuition. This includes sports fees, club or Enrichment Cluster fees, or money for field trips and school supplies. HMS currently does not charge a transportation fee.

## **Fundraising**

Patrons are asked to support fundraising efforts at HMS by participating in three main school fundraising events:

**The annual benefit auction** in October is a highlight of the school year where everyone contributes time and items for the auction. Students do class projects and parents are asked to sign-up to volunteer at the auction. This event is fun for the students and also raises money for operations and capital expenditures.

Parents are asked to raise \$500 between our **Fall Fundraiser** in November and the **Spring Fundraiser**. The November fundraiser sells quality poinsettias and wreaths as well as Pellman's cakes. The Spring fundraiser happens the first week in May and includes a chicken BBQ and student Servathon.

## **Scholarships**

Scholarships are available to families who complete the HMS scholarship application form and are eligible under our scholarship plan guidelines. Information on the scholarship process, eligibility and application forms can be found on the HMS web site under the *Admissions* link. Information and applications are also available from the school office.

Parents need to apply for scholarships by April 15 each school year to be eligible. Applications received after this date will be reviewed on an individual basis. A committee reviews requests and recommends assistance in a highly confidential manner. All families are invited to apply.

# ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND SERVICES

## Grading Scale

Students in grades K-2 are evaluated with a number scale translating to the following:

- 1 = Exceeding expectations
- 2 = Meeting expectations
- 3 = Approaching expectations
- 4 = Needs remediation

HMS uses the following grading scale for grades 3 - 8:

93 - 100	A	Superior
85 - 92	B	Above Average
73 - 84	C	Average
65 - 72	D	Below Average
0 - 64	F	Failure

Art, Music, Spanish and Physical Education are evaluated as:

S - Satisfactory or N - Needs Improvement.

## Homework

The parent's role in the educational process is vital to a child's success in school. Over the past 20 years, research has consistently indicated that positive parent involvement increases student academic achievement. If parents have a positive attitude toward homework, support the concept and work with their children, there is an excellent chance that the child will also have a positive attitude toward homework and school. HMS follows a general guideline of 10 minutes per grade level for a suggested time allotment for nightly homework – ie. 1<sup>st</sup> grade (10 min.) 8<sup>th</sup> grade (80 minutes)

Suggestions for Parents:

1. Provide a quiet, study area with a desk or table and chair and good lighting
2. Keep a tool supply handy: pencils, pen, crayons, paper, ruler, and dictionary
3. Establish a regular time for homework
4. Limit television viewing
5. Talk to your children about assignments and help them budget their time
6. Encourage step-by-step work on a long-term project to avoid last minute careless work.
7. Share your own interest in reading, writing, and learning. Set a positive example!

Appendix C gives more background to the HMS philosophy on homework.

## Technology – Acceptable Use

Students learn to use technology both responsibly and effectively in learning at HMS. Students will be asked to sign an acceptable use contract for both device use and user accounts each year. Parents will be given passwords and encouraged to help monitor student use of technology at home as well.

## **Report Cards and Mid-term Reports**

Mid-term reports and report cards are issued each trimester. Check the school calendar for the dates when report cards are sent home with students. Report card envelopes should be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the school as soon as possible after the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> trimesters.

## **Library Media Center**

Students must carry a pass in the Library/Media Center at any time other than your regular classroom visit.

### **Borrowing Books**

Each student has the opportunity to visit the library at least once a week. Books can be signed out for fourteen days. A receipt indicates when the book is due. When students sign out books for school projects, he/she is responsible to renew them if needed longer than two weeks.

Kindergarten students borrow one book at a time, grades one and two may borrow two, grade three may borrow three, and grades four on up may borrow an unlimited number. Parents may check the online portal to see the books their children have checked out. Check with the librarian for portal log-in information.

### **Book Fines**

Students in grades three and higher must pay fines for overdue books. All grades receive overdue and fine notices on Tuesdays and Fridays. Students with fines are not allowed to sign out other books until the fine is paid. It is up to the student to keep track of their overdue status and return or renew books as needed. Fines stop as soon as the book is returned. A fine notice is then generated for \$.10 per day. To pay a fine, bring the notice with your money attached (taped) and place it on the circulation desk or give it to the librarian on duty. If your child has been asked to pay a fine on a book he/she feels he/she did not sign out, ask him/her to talk to the librarian as soon as possible.

### **Borrowing Reference Materials & Periodicals**

Reference materials are to be signed out on a daily basis unless special permission is given. Reference materials may be taken to the classroom but must be returned the next school day. Periodicals (magazines), other than the current issue, may be put in a black folder and taken to your room on a sign-out basis for one day. The orange sign-out book is in the magazine area. You must return the magazines at the end of the day to the "magazine return box." Exceptions will be made to the length of borrowing time of magazines during special projects when the magazines can be kept in the classroom for an extended period of time.

### **Lost or Damaged Materials**

If a student loses a book, tell the librarian as soon as possible so the fine can be stopped. The student will be asked to pay for the lost book, plus any fine that has accumulated up to \$3.00. The replacement fee includes the replacement of the book plus processing fees. Paperbacks will be \$9.00 and hardcovers will be \$18.00. The money will be returned if the item is found and returned.

## **Physical Education (P.E.)**

Physical health is an important aspect for healthy living and active participation in the world around us. All students are required to participate in the health and physical education program at HMS. Students should wear sneakers on P.E. days and may be required to follow other dress guidelines

depending on their grade level. Middle school students must change into HMS shirts for P.E. class.

If a student has a medical reason for non-participation, he/she must present a note to the homeroom and P.E. teacher from the parent/guardian stating the reason for the exclusion. If the student is to be excluded for more than one P.E. period, a doctor's statement with the reason and the length of time of the exclusion must be provided. Under most circumstances, the student will be required to attend the class even though he/she will not be expected to participate.

## Student Services

**Educational testing-** HMS can provide educational testing for struggling students through the Intermediate Unit 13's nonpublic school services division. This service is used when classroom teachers need additional assistance to design a program that will meet a student's needs. Classroom teachers and/or the principal will speak with parents to recommend such testing. This service is provided at no cost. Educational testing is also available through your local school district or through private services.

**Learning Support Program-** HMS has a program staffed by a certified special education teacher for students who need additional support because of learning disabilities or other factors that impede educational progress. These services are provided at an additional charge. The learning support teacher and/or the principal will contact parents should they feel students would benefit from the program. Contact the office or click on the *Handbook Documents link* on the HMS web site to get the *LSP Guidelines*.

**Remedial reading and math support-** IU 13 provides a reading/math specialist to help struggling students. Classroom teachers and/or the principal will contact parents to recommend the services for students. These services are provided at no cost.

**Speech therapy-** IU 13 provides a speech therapist to work with students who need these services. Classroom teachers and/or the principal will contact parents to recommend the services for students. These services are provided at no cost.

**School counseling –** IU 13 services provide a school counselor to work with students on school related issues or personal issues that directly affect the student's performance at school.

**Student Support Team-** HMS has a student support team to help teachers and parents design and implement an action plan for students whose behavior is impeding academic progress. A member of the student support team or classroom teachers will contact parents if they feel students would benefit from an SST action plan. These services are provided at no cost.

**Academic Extension -** This program is offered to elementary students, grades 3-5, and middle school students, grades 6-8, who are above-average academically and/or intellectually. The program is designed to:

- provide additional academic challenge in the areas of students strengths
- develop social skills
- provide opportunity for like-minded students to meet together
- develop higher level thinking skills
- retain and develop an inquisitiveness in daily life

Students meet once weekly for both group activities or an individual project. Many of the projects are student-interest driven and are tailored toward the academic strengths of the group, so the emphasis of the program changes each trimester.

## Testing Program

In addition to tests used in the daily program, standardized tests are administered to students regularly. The results of these tests are used to provide support for individual students and evaluate the overall HMS educational program. Tests include:

**DIBELS testing-** is done three times a year in grades 1-3 to evaluate student growth in reading and design individual instructional programs based on the results. Primary instructional aides and teachers work with primary students in small groups to maximize student growth and success in areas of need indicated by DIBELS.

**Act 89 Testing** – Math progress testing in grades K-8 provided through IU 13 at the beginning, mid and end of school year.

**Terra Nova Achievement Test-** is given to third through eighth grade students in early November to determine their performance levels in core subject areas. Teachers evaluate the results to design teaching strategies for students and review the overall instructional program. Parents are given test results and are encouraged to contact the principal to review this information if they wish.

**Keystone Exams** - are given to middle school algebra students in late May. Exam results are returned in July and will be forwarded to the student's high school for math placement.

### Textbooks

Students are responsible for all textbooks issued to them during the school year. Lost or damaged books must be paid for before final report cards are issued at the end of the school year. Paperbacks will be \$9.00 and hard covers will be \$18.00. Contact the school whenever a textbook is lost so that a replacement can be given to the student. The office will also provide cost for replacements. A refund will be given if a lost book is found and returned to HMS.

## Music Lessons

In addition to the HMS band and string ensemble program, private music lessons on a variety of instruments are available through our music instructor as well as other private instructors. Parents can contact the HMS office to get contact information for the appropriate instrumental instructor. Fees for the private lessons are set by the instructor and should be paid directly to them. Instruments are also available for rent. Contact the music teacher for more information.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY

## Health Services and Requirements at HMS

Healthy children make better learners! A certified school nurse from ELANCO school district works with the HMS staff so we can achieve optimum health for students in our school community.

The PA School Code requires that school districts provide the following health services for school age children:

- Medical examinations upon entry to school, grade 6 and grade 11
- Vision screenings annually
- Hearing screenings annually for grades K-3 and grade 7
- Height and weight measurement annually
- Maintenance of medical and dental records
- Scoliosis screening
- Tuberculosis screening
- Dental examinations upon entry to school, grade 3 and 7

Submit completed forms from medical and dental examinations to the administrative assistant on the dates requested. Failure to submit the forms in a timely fashion can result in exclusion from school. These standards are established in the PA School Code.

## Taking Medications at School

Our staff is willing to cooperate with families and doctors when a child needs to take medication during school hours. Please follow the guidelines below to help protect your child as well as all the children in our school community:

- Prescription medication must be in the original labeled container from the pharmacy with the student's name, medication, dose, time interval, prescribing doctor's name, medication, date of prescription, and name/phone number of the pharmacy.
- Medications should be delivered to the office by parents/guardians with a note signed by the parent/guardian giving directions for administering medication.
- If they prefer, parents may come to school to administer medication to their own children.

## School Attendance for a Sick Child

HMS adheres to the following recommendations of the Communicable Disease Center:

- Sick children should be kept at home to avoid contact with other students and staff. Any child with flu-like symptoms (fever, nausea, diarrhea) should stay at home for at least 24 hours after they are fever free without the aid of fever-reducing drugs or 24 hours after other symptoms have gone away.
- If one child in your family is severely ill with flu conditions (such as the H1N1 virus), other school-aged family members should also be kept home for 5 days from the time someone

in the home became sick. The 5-day period provides enough time to know if someone else will become ill.

## **What to do to prepare for Flu Season**

- Plan for child care at home if your child gets sick
- Plan to monitor the health of the sick child and any other children by checking for fever and other flu symptoms.
- Update emergency contact lists.
- Have your family vaccinated for seasonal flu when vaccines are available.
- Educate your child(ren) about good hygiene practices – using tissues and washing hands frequently, especially after covering their mouth when coughing or sneezing,
- Use antibacterial soaps over flu season

## **Release of Students to Adults**

School staff members will only release students during the school day to parents/guardians unless given permission to do otherwise by the parents/guardians of a student. Parents or guardians can send a note to the office giving permission for children to go with another adult or call and talk to one of the office staff. Office staff will use their judgment on whether to accept or not accept notes or calls and may request identification as needed. The safety of students will take precedent over convenience.

## **Personal Safety**

Children should feel safe at school. Students may not use physical or verbal actions to intimidate or hurt other students. Violations of the above standard will be handled as stated in the HMS harassment policy. The harassment policy and procedures are found in Appendix D.

## **Clearances for Adults at School**

Community is important to the educational experience at HMS. Because of that, HMS welcomes parents and volunteers to actively participate in the education of our students. In order to raise the sense of security and accountability for adult-student interaction, HMS's Child Protection Policy outlines standards for allowing adults in the building and interacting with students. The following points are a summary of the policy:

- All guests and parents must sign-in at the front desk and wear an identifying badge while in the building.
- Parents/guardians who have enrolled students at HMS, faculty and staff, and contracted workers will have badges with their names on them.
- Employees are required to have child abuse, criminal record checks and FBI checks on file with the school office.
- Contracted service workers must have clearances on file with the office in order to work in the building unsupervised by HMS staff.
- Classroom or school-wide volunteers who work with students unattended by HMS staff must have a child abuse and criminal record check on file with the school office.

- Classroom volunteers who do not have clearances on file may help with activities at school providing they remain under the supervision of HMS staff or faculty.

## **Safety Drills**

Safety drills, such as fire, tornado, and lock-down drills, will be held at the school several times each school year. Specific instructions for the safety drills are described in faculty safety manuals. Evacuation

## **Security System**

Our property is protected by an electronic security system that is activated each night and on weekends. Police officers will be dispatched to investigate should the alarm go off. Police departments charged a fee for false alarms. To minimize false alarms:

- People holding meetings on campus after 6 pm or on weekends should get permission from the office staff.
- Do not enter classrooms, the library, or the hallways after 6 pm or on weekends without permission from the office staff
- Rental groups should only be in the gymnasium, kitchen, and lower level bathrooms unless other arrangements are made with the office staff

## **Weapons**

Weapons are not allowed to be brought on the HMS campus, buses, or at school-sponsored activities. This includes but is not be limited to: loaded or unloaded firearms (including any pellet guns, BB guns or look-alike firearms), knives (including kitchen knives or pocket knives), any type of cutting instrument or tool, clubs, slingshot, straight razor, explosives, firecrackers, noxious or irritating gases, poison, or any other tool, instrument, implement or chemical capable of inflicting serious bodily injury. Students carrying weapons on campus can be suspended or expelled on the first offense based on the principal's judgment and established disciplinary guidelines.

## **Energy Drinks & Sports Drinks**

Due to some of the short-term and long-term effects of energy drinks that provide the body with boosts of caffeine, extra vitamins, minerals or other additives, HMS does not permit students to drink energy drinks on the school campus or school-related events. Energy drinks with boosted caffeine have been linked to increased heart rates and blood pressure, as well as to other physical side effects. Sports drinks, such as Gatorade, are also strongly discouraged as a beverage for consumption at lunch or during the school day. We do allow students to use sports drinks for extra curricular sports events but still strongly recommend drinking water rather than the sports drinks.

# PARENT OPPORTUNITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## School Board Meetings

HMS is owned and governed by parent families who send their children to this school. The school board is made up of up to ten people, of which at least seven should be current patrons. The school board is the HMS governance body.

School Board meetings are open to the patron body; parents, teachers, and support staff are welcome to attend. Dates are listed on the school calendar and the HMS web site calendar. Agendas and minutes are included in NewsLinks.

Patrons are encouraged to attend Board meetings. The Board of Trustees welcomes input at the meetings regarding policies, procedures, and operations of the school. To address the Board at a regularly scheduled meeting, you must submit a written request that includes your name and the topic you wish to address. Requests may be submitted prior to the meeting by e-mailing <boardchair@hmsk8.org>. Requests to address the Board shall not be accepted after the meeting has been called to order.

## Annual Meeting

Every April the School Board convenes a meeting of school members to share about the major happenings of the year, introduce new initiatives and conduct a vote on new policy or Board members. The meeting has traditionally been a part of the Academic Fair evening event. The Board may call other meetings of the members as is needed to conduct the formal business of the school.

## Parent-Teacher Fellowship (PTF)

Parents support community events and the HMS teachers through the organizational work of the PTF committee. Parents are encouraged to become active members of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship committee, but even more, families are invited to attend the events it sponsors.

PTF-sponsored events include:

- Hot Lunch meals every Tuesday
- Back-to-School Night and Family Picnic in August
- Grandparents' Day in October
- Christmas gifts for faculty and staff in December
- An author's visit for Young Writer's Week every third year
- Board-Staff Appreciation Dinner in January
- HMS Winter Carnival in January or February
- Rolling Skating in March or April
- Teacher Appreciation Week in April

## **Volunteers**

HMS strongly encourages and welcomes parental involvement. Volunteer opportunities available include: working in the library, lunch monitors in classrooms, tutoring students, working as a classroom aide, and office assistant. Parents can also volunteer to assist on committees, with fundraising events, the Country Auction, Parent-Teacher Fellowship activities, maintenance to the facilities and grounds work. Volunteer sheets are included in the August mailing and committees will also include sign-up sheets throughout the year through backpack mail or *Newslink*.

# MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE

## Electronic Devices

The school day is an important time for academic and social learning. Parents may use their discretion in providing electronic devices to their children, however, they do so at their own risk of loss or damage. The use of such devices must follow the following guidelines when at school:

1. Cell phones may be brought school, but are to be turned off during the school day or while on the school bus. They should be kept in lockers or backpacks. If parents want to contact their son/daughter, they should do so through the office.
2. Parents may decide it is acceptable for their children to use electronic games or personal music players during the bus rides to and from school. However, we request that the devices are not loaned to other students. Headphones must be used whenever possible. The devices are to be stowed into backpacks or lockers before entering the building and should remain in backpacks during the school day.
3. HMS does not approve of electronic media that promote violence or music that does not promote Christian values. HMS does reserve the right to deny students the privilege of any electronic devices used on the HMS campus or on our buses if the contents do not meet state standards.
4. The exception to allowing personal electronic devices out during the day is if a student is using it with teacher permission and in conjunction with a class activity. The device must be returned to a backpack or locker as soon as the activity is completed.

## Lost and Found

HMS office staff will put misplaced items in the lost and found. Throughout the year a large amount of hats, coats, and gloves are often accumulated. If your child has lost an item, ask him/her to check the lost and found box in the school office or to speak with his/her teacher.

Lost and found items are also placed on tables by the gymnasium for students and parents to check during first and third quarter parent-teacher conferences. Items not claimed at the end of the first, third, and fourth quarter are donated to local organizations that sell used items.

## Renting School Facilities

Requests for community use of school facilities can be made by contacting the office and completing the appropriate forms. The HMS gym, athletic fields and kitchen are available to rent. Contact the school office for rental fees. Patrons of HMS are eligible for a discounted rental rate.

## **School Phone Use**

Student may ask permission to use school telephones located in the upper lobby or the gym lobby for emergencies or other essential reasons. We discourage phone calls to parents for forgotten items such as books or homework.

## **Student Photos and Yearbook**

A professional photographer takes student photos in October. Check out the school calendar for the dates. All students will be photographed regardless of whether or not parents purchase a photo pack because all student photos are included in the HMS yearbook. The photo company also gives complimentary class photos to each student, even if no packet was purchased. The school does not make any profit from either the photo days or yearbook sales. Yearbooks are available for purchase in February or March.

## **Political Positions**

HMS does not endorse one political party or candidate over another. If during an election season, political parties or candidates are discussed as part of the classroom curriculum, the teacher may discuss with students the political views or issues that various parties or candidates endorse, but it will be done within the context of demonstrating how American democracy functions. Teachers may also hold debates in the classroom when students are knowledgeable about various political views in an effort to teach them how to follow proper debate format and report from unbiased sources.

Neither teachers nor students should be publicly displaying flyers, posters, bumper stickers, buttons, or any other promotional materials at school in support of a particular political candidate.

## **Property Damages Fee**

HMS charges a minimum \$25 property damage fee for any damages intentionally imposed upon school property such as furniture or the physical building. We reserve the right to request additional money or replacement of the damaged property depending on the severity of the damage.

## **Promotional Advertising**

HMS does not distribute promotional materials for patrons or other community organizations in regards to advertising private businesses or special events unless they are educational in nature. If you have an event you wish to promote, please contact the office

# HANDBOOK APPENDIX ITEMS

## Handbook Appendix Items

- A. Grievance Procedures
- B. Grievance forms
- C. Homework Guidelines
- D. Harassment Policy
- E. Bus Rules
- F. Standards of Communication
- G. Parent Input at Board Meetings

## Handbook Forms Available Online:

*Click on "Parent Page" and "Forms"*

- 1) Excuse card
- 2) Trip Request Form
- 3) Pre-conference Form

*Click on "Admissions"*

- 4) Student registration form current families
- 5) Student application form for new families
- 6) Scholarship application

## Appendix A: Grievance Procedure

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a framework for settling misunderstandings or complaints that involve members of the school community. It is the intentions of these procedures to attain, at the lowest possible administrative level, in the shortest amount of time, solutions that bring restoration. Confidentiality is essential at all levels of this procedure for effective restoration. It is suggested that each level of the procedure be completed within a two to three week time frame.

#### **Level 1**

**Patrons or staff members** with a grievance are encouraged to settle it in the spirit of Matthew 18:15. The essence of this verse is that if a staff person or patron offends you or your child, go to him or her and work it out between the two of you privately. We encourage you to initiate the contact by choosing one of the following options:

- a. Use the Level 1 Grievance Form provided at the back of your tuition booklet to communicate your concern to the individual.
- b. Make a phone call or send an email to the concerned party.

We expect the majority of the misunderstandings or complaints between believers can be resolved at this level.

#### **Level 2**

**If the grievance is not resolved** to the satisfaction of both parties, the dissatisfied party submits a Level 2 Grievance Form (see HMS Parent-Student handbook appendix) to the school principal\* after notifying the other party as in Matthew 18:16. After receiving the "grievance form," the principal will talk to both parties individually to clarify the situation.

The principal\* will then decide upon a course of action that could include a joint meeting with both parties, where he/she serves as a mediator, providing guidance toward restoration. An advisory team will be available to the principal at all levels of the grievance procedure.

#### **Level 3.**

**The principal\* will call a meeting where a restorative justice format** (see Parent-Student handbook appendix) will be used, facilitated by an appointed, neutral mediator should the misunderstanding or complaint continue to be unresolved. Both parties will be permitted to bring in support people.

#### **Level 4.**

**If an agreement is not reached in the restorative justice meeting,** the dissatisfied party may appeal to the board.

\* If the principal is involved in the grievance, the form is submitted to the board chair who then acts as the mediator.

Approved by HMS board 5/02

## Appendix B: Grievance Form

### **Level 1 Grievance Form** ***For use by parents, teachers, principals, support staff and board members***

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ : I have a concern I would like to discuss with you. This concern is (be brief) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

I can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_ (phone/e-mail address)

I am available \_\_\_\_\_  
(include days and/or times)

I look forward to following the grievance procedure as outlined in the HMS Parent-Student and Staff Handbooks to bring resolution to this concern. I will keep this concern in prayer until we have an opportunity to discuss it. Thanks in advance for working on this with me.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Level 2 Grievance Form** ***For use by parents, teachers, principals, support staff and board members***

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ : I have a concern I would like to discuss with you. This concern is (be brief) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

The level 2 grievance procedure assumes you have used the level 1 procedure to resolve the concern. If you have not used level 1, please explain why:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please state reason for taking this issue to level 2 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What action or communication would make this situation right for you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I look forward to following the grievance procedure as outlined in the HMS Parent-Student and Staff Handbooks to bring resolution to this concern. I will keep this concern in prayer until we have an opportunity to discuss it. Thanks in advance for working on this with me.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Homework Guidelines

### **HOMework GUIDELINES**

HMS developed this homework guideline policy to help parents understand the:

1. Reasons why we assign homework at each grade level
2. Amount of homework they can expect children to have on a given evening
3. Expectations and responsibilities for both students and parents

Parents sometimes wonder if the amount of time their child spends on an average school night is in line with the school's goal. Look over the homework time guideline supplied here for the grade levels. We encourage parents to contact the classroom teacher if your child consistently spends more time than we recommend for their grade level to complete homework assignments. The teacher and parents can look at the individual situation and then determine together what course of action to take.

#### **Primary Department**

**(Kindergarten-grade 2)**

Homework assignments for students in kindergarten through second grade include: nightly reading bag assignments, studying spelling words, reading/writing activities and occasional Bible memory work. Students will have math homework as well as homework in other core subjects some days. Homework is always used to reinforce learning that has taken place during the school day. It serves to promote reading skills and development. Homework is also a way for parents to keep in touch with their child's academic progress and provides opportunities to talk about a student's daily "job" that we call school.

#### **Intermediate Department**

**(grades 3-5)**

#### **Middle School Department**

**(grades 6-8)**

Some research in the last decade focused on the relationship between homework and student achievement and it has greatly strengthened the case for homework. There are three types of homework in grades 3-8:

- **Practice** - Practice assignments reinforce newly acquired skills. For example, students who have just learned a new method of solving a math problem should be given sample problems to complete on their own. Having students practice their spelling words is another example of this.
- **Preparation** - This type of homework assignment helps students get ready for activities that will occur later in the classroom. For example, in fourth and fifth grades, students might prepare to lead discussion in their reading group, or third through eighth grade students might study for upcoming tests.
- **Extension** - These assignments require longer-term research, or they are projected assignments. An example of this might be fourth or fifth graders preparing their projects for the History fair, or sixth or eighth graders preparing for the science fair.

### **Suggested average amount of homework time per school night:**

- K and first grade: 10-15 minutes (*remember, this includes recreational reading*)
- second grade: 10-20 minutes
- third grade 20-30 minutes
- fourth grade 25-35 minutes
- fifth grade 35-45 minutes
- sixth grade 45-60 minutes
- seventh grade 45-60 minutes
- eighth grade 45-60 minutes

### **Here's How Parents Can Help**

1. Provide a good study area for your children to do their assignments.
2. Plan a homework schedule with your child. Set specific time when homework is done.
3. Check to see that assignments are completed on time and done well.
4. Limit after-school activities to allow time for homework.
5. Encourage your child to write assignments in their homework planner (grades 4-8).
6. Get involved as your children do homework. Guide them through the work as needed:
  - Go over homework assignments with them.
  - Monitor their progress. Do they need assistance? Nudge them along if they get stuck.
  - Talk with them about their reading assignments. Have them tell you about a passage. Did they understand it? Can they tell you about it?
  - Do some problems with them. Then observe your child doing the next one or two problems. Do they understand the process?
  - Talk to your child's teacher if they regularly spend more time than suggested to work out a satisfactory solution.

## **Appendix D: Harassment Policy and Procedure**

### **HARASSMENT POLICY**

Hinkletown Mennonite School is committed to providing a safe and caring learning environment where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. HMS seeks to follow the commands of Jesus in Matthew 22:37-39:

“... You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

This is the greatest commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Harassment is a form of discrimination and aggression. It is unacceptable in a Mennonite school community. For the purposes of this policy, harassment is synonymous with an established pattern of intimidation, bullying, taunting, and teasing that is reported to school administration.

### **DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT**

Harassment includes behavior that may be verbal or physical as well as deliberate, unsolicited and unwelcome. It is commonly a repeated behavior, but may be a single incident if grievous.

Harassment may include but is not limited to:

1. Verbal abuse or threats
2. Unwelcome physical contact and/or coercing or influencing third parties to harass others
3. Derogatory remarks, jokes, and innuendos including taunts about a person's body, attire, age, gender, ethnic or national origin, socio-economic status, and religion
4. Displaying pornographic, racist or other offensive or derogatory photos, pictures or slogans
5. Sexual comments, invitations, requests or demands (indirect or explicit)
6. Inappropriate gestures
7. Intimidating others to participate in unlawful or unethical activities
8. Intimidating others to participate in activities that contradict school and/or board policy

Revised: 8/11/05 CDC

### **HARASSMENT PROCEDURES**

HMS shall have measures in place to prevent harassment, which include one or more of the following:

1. School policy development on related topics to be communicated to students, parents, and staff
2. Professional development activities on related topics for teachers
3. Information sections in both the parent-student and teacher handbooks on how to handle harassment
4. A program designed to develop and maintain positive school climate
5. Conflict resolution or peer mediation programs
6. Programs or presentations on relevant topics for parents

Harassment reports will be reviewed and incidents will be classified as level one, two, or three offenses and handled as indicated below. Reports are to be directed to members of the administrative team (principal and middle school coordinator) when harassment begins. Reporting is intended to help the victim and the first concern of the principal will be the needs of the victim.

### **LEVEL ONE OFFENSE**

A member of the administrative team will interview those involved and assess the situation and take notes. Whether the situation is a result of a misunderstanding or not, those involved must agree to cease any offensive behavior. The complainant must be willing to supply names,

circumstances, and approximate dates. The complainant must expect that the principal will inform the offender of the allegations. Consequence: Administrative team will notify parents involved and take action warranted.

### **LEVEL TWO OFFENSE**

The principal will take a written statement from the complainant that includes names, dates, and circumstances. The principal will inform the offender, complainant and their parents of the situation and consequences of any further harassment. Consequence: Administrative team will meet with the parents involved and present an action plan to correct the behavior. Parent input will be sought and considered for inclusion in the action plan.

### **LEVEL THREE OFFENSE**

The principal will suspend the student until the offender's parents meet with a committee appointed by the principal to review the situation. The review committee will include the principal, a board member, a parent, and at least one teacher. Consequence: Following this meeting, the review committee will recommend the student be reinstated, suspended for a specified period of time or expelled. This committee will establish conditions for reinstatement. The principal will make decisions on suspensions and the school board on expulsions.

Revised: 8/11/05 CDC

## Appendix E: Bus Rules

The school runs six buses to provide transportation for our students. Bus drivers have the full support of the school community and the authority to maintain order on the bus. It is assumed that children are subject to the authority of the school when they enter the bus--- just as they are subject to the authority granted to teachers in their classrooms. Bus transportation is a privilege that can be suspended if a child does not behave responsibly.

### **STUDENT BEHAVIOR ON BUSES**

Bus drivers have authority to keep order on the school buses. This is important for two reasons:

1. So the bus driver can concentrate on driving the vehicle. Noise and behavior problems are a safety concern because they distract drivers.
2. So students have a pleasant ride to and from school. Disruptive behavior can cause them anxiety and stress.

For these reasons we support the bus drivers authority and use the following procedures to deal with problems that arise:

1. Bus drivers have the authority to assign seats or make other rules for standards of behavior on their buses.
2. These rules will be explained to the students at the beginning of each school year.

### **STUDENT DISCIPLINE ON BUSES**

The following procedures will be used to ensure that the rules are followed:

#### **First offense or misbehavior:**

The bus driver will give the student a warning.

Exception: students who violate safety rules will be reported to the principal on first offense. The principal or bus driver will contact the parents about this safety issue.

#### **Second offense:**

The bus driver will inform the student that the incident will be reported to the principal. The driver will complete a discipline referral form and submit it to the office. The principal will meet with the student and discuss the problem promptly. Parents may or may not be contacted depending on the individual situation.

#### **Third offense:**

The bus driver will complete a discipline referral form and submit it to the office. The principal will contact the parents to inform them that the student will be suspended for a specified amount of days to be determined by the principal depending on the severity of the offense.

### **BUS RULES**

#### **1) Remain in your assigned seat at all times. (PA state law)**

- Sit properly with your bottom on the seat and face forward at all times
- If a bus has seat belts, students must be buckled in at all times.

#### **2) Keep all body parts in your seat area at all times.**

- No reaching out the window when windows are open
- No putting feet and legs in the aisle
- No reaching across the aisle or over seats

#### **3) Communicating with passing vehicles is not permitted nor may items be thrown out the window. (PA state law)**

- No signaling, motioning or yelling out the windows

**4) Treat the bus driver and fellow students with respect.**

- Follow the driver's instruction the first time they speak to you.
- Do not deliberately push against the seat in front of you.
- Use acceptable language and conversation at all times.
- Use an "inside voice" level when speaking to people seated next to you.

**5) Do not take things from people that do not belong to you.**

- Borrowing other student's personal items, such as electronic devices, is strongly discouraged.

**6) No eating, drinking or chewing gum on the bus.**

**These rules apply to all situations when students are riding the bus (transportation to and from school, field trips and extracurricular events) unless the bus driver or teacher gives other directions prior to the trip.**

## APPENDIX F: STANDARDS OF COMMUNICATION

### Standards and Expectations for Communication with Parents

- Teachers are expected to maintain and keep current a classroom page on the school website. Information that is required to be on the page includes the following:
  - a. Contact information
  - b. Upcoming classroom or subject specific events
  - c. Long range or on going assignments
- A copy of any email communication or hard copies sent home to parents needs to be supplied to the school office when being sent home with students.
- Parents need to be informed about field trips or any event in which students will leave the HMS campus.
- Any time a child is injured at school, the teacher or adult present is responsible for completing a “Physical Injury Report Form” found in “Forms” in Sharedstaff. The form must be completed and turned in to the office prior to dismissal the day the incident occurred so a copy can be sent home to parents.
- When a student is failing tests or is falling behind in a subject area, the teacher is expected to be in communication with parents prior to reporting a grade on a report card or discussing the concern at school-wide Parent-Teacher Conference days.
- When a student has a behavior issue that requires a special reprimand or correction plan, the teacher is expected to be in communication with the parent(s).
- School news or announcements shall be communicated through classroom newsletters, the school website or the WOW newsletter.
- Emergency situations will be communicated to parents through office personnel via phone chain, web site, media communication or any other form of communication deemed most reliable for getting the message relayed.

Updated 2/9/11

## Appendix G: Procedure for Parent Input at Board Meetings

(approved 2/13/03)

Patrons are encouraged to attend HMS board meetings to listen and learn. The board of trustees also welcomes input from patrons. Input from patrons helps the board of trustees make decisions with the benefit of additional opinions and viewpoints.

To address the board of trustees at a regularly scheduled meeting, you must submit a written request that includes your name and the topic you wish to address. The request may be submitted prior to the meeting by sending a message to [boardchair@hmsk8.org](mailto:boardchair@hmsk8.org). You may also submit the request immediately prior to the meeting on the form provided at the meeting. Requests to address the board of trustees shall not be accepted after the meeting has been called to order.

Each patron will be given up to 10 minutes to address the board of trustees. The amount of time given to each patron may be reduced depending on how many patrons wish to address the board of trustees at a given meeting. The board of trustees will generally not take action on items presented during this segment of the meeting.

- The board of trustees will consider the input for making decisions about agenda items
- The topic may be scheduled for a future meeting
- The board chairperson may refer the topic to staff or a committee

Written copies of your comments or other supporting documents may be presented to each of the ten board members when you address the board of trustees. At the conclusion of patron input, members of the board of trustees may ask questions for clarification.

The board of trustees welcomes input at board meetings regarding policies, procedures, and operations of the school. Concerns about personnel must be addressed by following the steps outlined in the grievance procedure.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Topic \_\_\_\_\_

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