

# *Highland Falls-Fort Montgomery Central School District Vision*

*The Highland Falls-Fort Montgomery Central School District will inspire, guide, and challenge each of our students through an all encompassing rigorous learning experience, which empowers them to connect to and compete in the ever-changing global community.*

# Welcome!

The Fort Montgomery Elementary School extends a welcome to Parents and children who are beginning their school years. We, the Faculty, Staff and Administration are committed to a standards-focused school program that has as its purpose these two basic goals:

- ❖ The intellectual development and academic achievement of all children;
- ❖ The personal and social development of each child.

Our early childhood educational program focuses on educating and nurturing, in a culture of shared responsibility, both the intellectual development and the personal needs of our children. Our philosophy of education reflects the shared beliefs of the Highland Falls-Fort Montgomery School District. We strive to create an educational program for our children, that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, integrated, and standards-based.

Our philosophy is based on this foundation:

- ❖ We believe that all children, especially young children, proceed through predictable developmental stages of learning and come to us with their unique experiences, needs and abilities. When we respect children's individuality and treat them with dignity, they flourish.
- ❖ We know that all children learn best when they actively participate in a variety of experiences. When experiences and materials are appropriate to the stages of learning and are offered in an organized and stimulating environment, growth and learning are promoted.
- ❖ Because the best learning occurs in an environment where curriculum is integrated and challenges the children as they move from concrete to abstract thinking, we plan lessons and projects to activate this

learning. In addition to providing enriched learning experiences for all children, our teachers act as facilitators of learning who are caring and flexible role models.

- ❖ We believe that parents are an integral part of each child's education. When parents and teachers work together, they support the child's education and maximize school success.

Our children have a responsibility in this educational program, also. We expect them to maintain atmosphere of *respect for self and for others* in the learning environment. This respect means that each child does his and her part to learn and grow; to put the best effort into their schoolwork; and to make their relationships with their teachers, the school staff and the other students positive, caring relationships. We expect our children to accept responsibility for their actions and to accept the consequences for their actions whether positive or negative. We all grow by our experiences - our successes and our mistakes.

We expect that our children will follow the rules - of their classrooms and of the school. We all need order in which to work, to think, and to maintain the atmosphere of respect. Rules assist us in keeping order. We encourage and expect that our children will use their creativity and ingenuity in their participation in the life of the school. We want our children to enjoy being here and really want to come to school each day!



## Program of Instruction

The primary goal of the program of instruction at the Fort Montgomery Elementary School is to provide classroom instruction appropriate to the needs and characteristics of the young child by skilled and knowledgeable teachers. This instruction is founded on an appreciation and understanding of the emotional, intellectual, physical, psychological, and social development of each child. Classroom instruction focuses on knowledge and understanding of New York State's Core Learning Standards, and involves the children in their learning by encouraging them to contribute to their learning experiences, to make choices, to explore, to question, to experience, to learn, and to grow.

Children receive instruction in the following subjects:

- ❖ **Common Core English Language Arts:** which includes Reading for Literature, Reading for Information, Foundational Skills for Reading - (phonological awareness, phonics, concept of print, word recognition and fluency), Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Conventions of Language (grammar, usage, vocabulary).
- ❖ **Common Core Mathematics:** which includes counting and cardinality, operations and algebraic thinking, measurement and data, geometry, number and operations in base ten, through hands-on learning.
- ❖ **Social Studies:** which includes the self and others; my family and other families now and long ago; my community and other United States Communities, world communities integrated into our literature based Language Arts Program.
- ❖ **Science:** which includes analysis and inquiry of scientific concepts, principles, and theories about the physical setting and the living environment integrated into our literature based Language Arts Program.

- ❖ **Health and Physical Education:** which includes personal health, fitness and flexibility, knowledge of a safe and healthy environment.
- ❖ **Technology:** which includes problem solving, patterning, and the knowledge and use of technology as it is integrated into the learning program.
- ❖ **The Arts:** which includes creation and performance in the arts - music and the visual arts
- ❖ In addition, instruction in certain special areas is provided:
  - Culture and heritage of the student population.
  - Alcohol, drug, and tobacco abuse; safety; highway, traffic, bicycle, school and home, fire drills and fire prevention, personal and school safety.
  - Conservation; environmental studies; humane treatment of animals.

### **Academic Expectations**

Fort Montgomery Elementary School expects all children to perform to the best of their ability. Teachers evaluate the children's progress on a regular basis through the completion of class work, homework, informal and formal assessments.

### **Homework**

Homework is important because it is a valuable aid in helping children make the most of their experiences in school. It reinforces what has been learned in class, prepares children for upcoming lessons, teaches responsibility and independence, and helps them develop positive attitudes toward independent learning. The children at the Fort Montgomery Elementary School receive homework according to the teacher's plan and homework policy. This is communicated in writing to the parents and on the teacher's web page.



### **Grades and Grading**

Report Cards are distributed four times a year. Because the report card is a link between the school and the home, the first and third reports are distributed through individual parent conferences. It is essential that parents plan to attend these conferences to be well informed on the child's educational strengths and needs.

## Assessments

Assessment measures how well students are doing in school. In addition to giving feedback on children's progress, assessment provides important information to the school staff and parents to guide them in helping children meet New York State Common Core Standards.

There are various types of assessment that are used in school: *Ongoing Assessment*, *Individualized and Rubric Assessments* and *Nationally Normed Assessments*. All are essential to effective instruction and must focus on what is taught and what students should know and be able to do and their various grade levels.



- *Ongoing* classroom assessment uses student work that teachers collect in class to measure progress and plan appropriate instruction. It may include results of teacher-made tests, collections of children's work and other projects as well as teacher's notes and observations. Teachers use this type of assessment to provide children with continuous feedback on their progress.
- *Individualized and Rubric Assessment* is based on specific benchmark rubrics developed to assess the core standards. This type of assessment is done in Kindergarten and First Grade to prepare the report card. In all grades the teachers administer Exemplar Assessments which are also based on a rubric but designed more in line with the New York State Assessments. These are administered in a group.
- *Nationally Normed Assessments* are tests that compared each child to all students of a grade level, nationally. These tests measure how well children have mastered skills and concepts at key points in their education. Some of these tests are administered individually and some in a group. The children at the Fort Montgomery Elementary School take the following nationally normed tests:
  - **DIAL-4** (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning) - All children entering Kindergarten are screened with this test before coming to school. This is an individually administered developmental screening test designed to identify strengths and weaknesses in the skill areas that are the foundations of academic learning - motor skills, concepts, language skills, self-help and social development.

- **DIBELS** - (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) - This assessment is a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. They are designed to be short fluency measures to monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills.
- **Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessments** - Each child is assessed individually, as to his/her progress in reading. This gives us a specific reading level. Children must achieve the expected reading levels for a grade in order to be promoted to the next grade.
- **MAP Assessment (Measures of Academic Progress) for Primary Grades** - This is a computer based assessment that measures a student's growth. It is an adaptive assessment, meaning that it takes a child to his/her level and predicts growth that can take place with proper instruction throughout the school year. All students take this assessment in the beginning and at the end of the year with some progress monitoring at regular intervals during the year.

### Special Subjects

In addition to regular instruction in ELA, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies the children at FMES take special subjects taught by teachers certified in those areas. They take the following:

- ❖ Art
- ❖ Music
- ❖ Physical Education



### Library

To encourage reading at home, we have an **Open Library Circulation policy**. All students have one library period a week but they may exchange books at any time, not just during an assigned circulation period.



### OVERDUE PROCEDURES:

If a student has any overdue books, he or she will not be allowed to check out anything until the overdue books are returned or renewed.

When books are overdue, a first notice is sent to the student and the student's borrowing privileges are restricted. After the second week, a

notice is sent to the student's parents or guardians. Failure to respond to the second notice will result in a bill mailed to the student's parents or guardians. If the book is not returned or paid for, the matter will be turned over to the principal.

A student with restricted borrowing privileges may use library materials for class assignments in the library.

### **Author Visit**

As part of our Literacy Program, an Author Visit is arranged whenever possible. Notable children's authors are invited to speak to the children about their books and writing. Copies of the author's books are available for purchase. The author will sign the books as family keepsakes.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips have both educational and recreational value in the school program. Each class plans trips during the school year. These trips are integrated with the Social Studies, Science and Language Arts curriculum. A follow-up assignment for the students is a part of the field trip experience.



A permission slip *must be signed* by a parent to insure consent for taking a field trip. Notices are sent home in regard to specific trips. We must have an adequate number of chaperones for supervision. Children are expected to act with consideration and good manners while on the field trip. If a child has been a discipline problem, it is left to the discretion of the teacher and principal as to whether or not he/she can participate in a field trip.

### **Retention**

When the possibility of retaining a child in his/her grade arises, the parent will be informed no later than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Report Card time and again at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Report Card. The decision is based on a careful examination of the child's performance and is based on a combination of the following:

- ❖ The child has not attained the benchmarks for the grade level in English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- ❖ The child demonstrates social and emotional immaturity and is unable to complete ordinary learning tasks consistent with average performance at the grade level.



- ❖ The child has not achieved satisfactory scores on assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- ❖ The child has not demonstrated acceptable effort in achieving academic success such as: failure to complete school learning activities and consistent in-attention to classroom instruction.

A conference with parents, teachers, counselor, and the principal will take place. After this consultation, the responsibility for retaining the student rests with the Principal.

### **Response to Intervention - RtI**

Children who do not master the academic material for a grade level are eligible for services through our Response to Intervention program. The Fort Montgomery Elementary School provides the following services:

- ❖ Through the federally funded Title I Program, students are provided remedial assistance in Reading and Math. A specially trained teacher works with the students in small groups outside of the classroom as well as pushing into in their regular classrooms. The focus is on helping students attain the skills necessary to perform in their regular classes.
- ❖ Students whose first language is not English receive special instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL) from a certified ESL teacher.
- ❖ Students who display speech/language or motor delays may be recommended to receive RtI services from the speech pathologist or occupational therapist.

### **Support Services**

A network of trained professionals, special programs, and community resources are provided to assist those students who have extraordinary needs and require additional services to cope with life changes and/or the demands of the school learning environment. At the Fort Montgomery Elementary School, the students may receive the services School Psychologist.



### **Special Learning Needs**

The Fort Montgomery Elementary School makes every effort to meet individual children's learning needs. Sometimes, however, a child may have needs that do not permit him or her to benefit fully from the regular school program. In those cases, your child's teachers will schedule a meeting with

the school Response to Intervention Team (RtI) to discuss alternative approaches that may assist your child's learning. When alternatives have been exhausted in the regular classroom and through the RtI Program and a child is still not progressing, the Team makes a recommendation to the parent for further evaluation through the Committee on Special Education (CSE).

### **Special Education**

A student suspected of having a disability is referred in writing to the Chairperson of the Committee on Special Education (CSE). The parent must give consent to an initial evaluation to determine if the student meets the eligibility criteria for special education services. When a child has been evaluated by the CSE, a meeting is scheduled with the parents to present the results of the evaluation. Pending those results, an individualized educational plan may be developed with further academic interventions for the child's educational success.

The special education services provided at the Fort Montgomery Elementary School include: a *Co-Teaching Program* which includes special education students in the regular classroom and a special education teacher who partners with the regular classroom teacher; *Speech - Language Therapy*, *Occupational Therapy* and *Physical Therapy*, *Special Class Reading and Math*. In addition to these programs, through our affiliation with the Orange-Ulster BOCES a wide range of programs are available to meet the particular needs of more serious conditions.



## CHILD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



### **Medical Examinations**

Students in Grades K and 1 must have a physical examination. This medical examination requirement may be met in one of two ways. A "Health Certificate" can be obtained from the school, filled out by the child's doctor, which is then returned to the school nurse. If a "Health Certificate" is not on file prior to school physicals, the school physician will conduct the examination. Please avoid duplication of services by returning the examination results by September 30<sup>th</sup>, or notifying the School Nurse of a future appointment.

The nurse will follow up on any concerns found in the medical examination. Parents are notified and urged to consult their own family physician for advice regarding medical conditions. If a private physician's care is not possible, the school nurse can help the family locate other resources.

If families are not eligible for Medicaid and do not have access to health insurance for their children independently, affordable health insurance for all children is available in New York State through the Child Health Plus Program. The school nurse can assist families with an application for this program

### **Vision / Hearing Tests**

Students are screening annually for vision and hearing. If a problem is suspected, the school nurse notifies parents and additional testing may be recommended. Students can be retested during the school year.

### **Cumulative Health Record**

A record is kept for each child showing his/her growth and development, including all immunization records and problems requiring special needs.

### **Illness or Injury at School**

Should a child be injured or become ill at school, the school nurse will telephone the home, work or emergency numbers provided. It is advisable for all parents to have on file with the school office, their phone and at least two emergency phone numbers so that they may be contacted in an emergency. We will send children home with a temperature of 100° or above. Please keep your child home for at least 24 hours after the fever has returned to normal without medication.



The School has no legal right to assume responsibility for medical care of students injured in school. ONLY immediate first aid may be given.

If a child has a chronic illness such as asthma or a condition that warrants frequent use of the bathroom, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the school and classroom teacher in writing so that we are aware of the condition and can accommodate the child.

### **Legal Excuse for Absence**

The New York State Education Department considers the following as legal excuses for absences:

1. Sickness
2. Sickness or death in immediate family
3. Impassable roads or weather conditions making travel unsafe
4. Religious observances (by written request of parent in advance of the observance)
5. Health treatment \*
6. Required attendance to be in court
7. Attendance at clinics

*\* Regular doctor appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours whenever possible*

## **Communicable Disease Control**

In order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and to insure rapid recovery with a minimum of after effects, it is advisable to keep a child home from school, when he/she shows significant signs of illness, such as a fever of 100° or more, a runny nose with green-yellowish discharge, vomiting, etc. *A child may return to school when the child has a normal temperature for 24 hours without medication.*

When a child becomes ill at home, parents should notify the school nurse in order to assist in preventing and controlling communicable diseases. The school nurse will be glad to talk with you regarding any questions you have.

Periodic health inspections may be needed to aid us in the prevention and control of communicable diseases. Parents/guardians will be notified as appropriate.

## **Immunizations**

According to New York State Law, Regulation 66.3 and Chapter 926, children must be immunized in order to attend school in the Highland Falls-Fort Montgomery Central School District. Failure to comply with this policy and State law will mean that your child will **NOT** be able to enter school until the immunization (polio, measles, diphtheria, rubella and mumps) is in process (an appointment has been made) or the immunization requirements are met.



The doctor may excuse a child if the immunization would be detrimental to his/her health; but it **MUST BE IN WRITING** and signed by a physician. If an outbreak of that disease occurs, the child will automatically be required to stay home.

Families whose religion/religious beliefs do not permit immunizations must submit the appropriate exemption application to the school principal along with a statement from a religious representative explaining the tenets of the faith that include immunization exemption. The school principal is the only one who can grant this exemption.

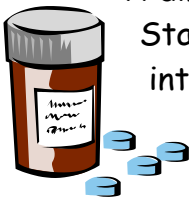
### **Head Lice**

Infestation by head lice is a common problem, especially after the summer vacation. It does not mean that your child is unclean but only that he/she has come into contact with others who have lice. If your child becomes infected, he/she **may not** stay in school. The child must be treated with the appropriate medication and be lice free before returning to school. When an infestation occurs in school, the school nurse will check each child in the class/school. If a child is found with head lice, the parent will be called to take the child home for treatment.

### **Toilet Training**

All children entering Kindergarten are expected to be toilet trained. In case of a toileting accident, parents are asked to keep a change of clothing in school. Children are expected to change their own clothing in the privacy of a bathroom. If a child cannot change or clean him/herself or does not have a change of clothing, parents will be called to bring clothing and change the child. For privacy and safety, **school personnel are not allowed to change the clothing of a child.**

### **Taking Medication During School Hours**



A directive from the Bureau of Health Service of the New York State Education Department points out that the dispensing of internal medication such as aspirin or antibiotics to the students is not only contrary to good health policy but is also contrary to nursing regulations and provisions of the State Education Law.

Under certain unusual circumstances, when it is necessary for the child to take internal medication during school hours, the School Nurse may cooperate with the family physician and the parents.

If a child must take medication during the school day, the following procedure is to be followed:

- A written document from the doctor must be submitted stating the name of the medication, dosage and frequency, and time to be given.
- A written request from the parent for medication to be taken in school must be submitted.
- The parent must bring ALL medication to the nurse in a prescription bottle with the drugstore label.

No medication will be dispensed unless the above requirements are met.

All medication is safely locked away in the health room medication cabinet. Children should never carry medication with them in their book bags during the school day.



# SCHOOL PROCEDURES AND PROGRAMS

## Student Arrival / Departure

ARRIVAL: 8:00 a.m.

DEPARTURE: 2:55 p.m.

- All students are eligible to ride the bus to and from the Fort Montgomery School. It is recommended that all students ride the bus every day if possible. If parents pick up and drop off, cars sometimes back up onto Rte. 9W presenting a dangerous traffic situation.



- When children ride the bus, they are assigned a bus stop by the transportation department. A designated adult must meet the children at the bus stop. In an emergency, children may be returned to the Fort Montgomery Elementary School until a parent can be reached. Changes in drop off will be made for extreme emergencies **only** and must be submitted in writing for approval by the Principal.
- If parents choose to drive their children to school in the morning, they must park the car and walk the child into the school building. Parking is available in the lower and upper parking lots. **Please do not park on the circle, in front of the school building or block other traffic by stopping in the driveway**
- At dismissal, parents who pick up their children must park and go to the side gym door to sign the child out. Prior notice of pick up is essential for us to have the child waiting in the proper place.
- If a child is brought late to school, he/she must be walked into the building through the front door and signed in by the parent or relative dropping the child off.

Supervision is available for five minutes before arrival time and five minutes after departure time. Please do not pick up or drop off students outside of these time frames.



*For the safety of all, the front door is the only accessible entrance to our school. It is locked at all times. Please ring the bell and wait for the buzzer to open the door.*



### **Breakfast and Lunch Program**

Breakfast is offered in school starting at 7:50 AM. All children are invited to participate; it is not mandatory. Free or reduced price meals are available to those families who qualify. Forms are sent home at the beginning of each school year.

A hot lunch is offered every day in school. The menu is sent home in the form of a monthly calendar with the meals for each day posted. The menu is also posted on the FMES web site. Children may also bring a lunch from home.

Lunches may be paid for in advance or on a daily basis. Payments may be made in cash, check or credit card on the district web site. Checks are to be made payable to the Fort Montgomery School Lunch Program. Cash payments should be placed in an envelope with the child's name, teacher and amount clearly marked.

During breakfast and lunchtime, children are expected to talk in a normal tone of voice and have good table manners. They are not permitted to get up from the table and run around the room. Cafeteria Monitors are on duty to maintain order and safety for the children. After eating, the children have time to play either outside on the playground during nice weather, or inside with various activities during inclement weather.

### **Admission to School**

The New York State Education Department requires that all children attend school until the age of 16 years. Students are admitted to the Fort Montgomery Elementary School for Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade.

New applicants for the Fort Montgomery Elementary School should register in the school office. Registration forms are available on the District Web Site or in the school office. Parents are asked to bring the last year's report card, three proofs of address, a birth certificate, immunization records and a recent physical examination report. Parents also sign a

release of records form to have the previous school send the student's school records for their new permanent file at the Fort Montgomery Elementary School.

### **Absence and Lateness**

Every day that a student attends school is an opportunity to learn and grow. It is the parents' responsibility to see that their children are in school and on time for classes. Students must attend 90% of the school year. Absence in excess of this may cause retention in the grade to be considered.

Students suffering from a prolonged illness or accident may consider home instruction as an alternative to just missing school time.

When a student returns to school after having been absent, he/she must bring a note from home explaining the reason for his/her absence.

If a student is late for school, he/she should bring a note of explanation. If a student is late or absent for an unexplained reason it is recorded on the student's record as an unexcused absence or tardiness. Parents are asked to call the school by 8:15 A.M. to report absence.

*School  
Notes*

When entering or leaving school at a time different from entrance or dismissal, a student must be **signed out** by his/her parent, in the office. If a student is to be signed out by someone other than a parent or the emergency contact person indicated on the Student Emergency Card, parents are required to phone the office or write a letter stating this information.

### **Change of Address / Telephone**

When changing an address or telephone number, please inform the school in writing. Give the date when the move is effective and your phone number, if changed. Also, please notify the school if there is a change in a babysitter's name and/or phone number.

Please give us your unlisted phone number. You may be assured it will be held in confidence. Also, we need the phone number of a person whom we can call if the parent cannot be reached at the regular home or work phone. If this emergency contact is changed, please notify the school. Emergency contacts MUST be someone who is local and can come to the school, if necessary.



### **School Closing / Delayed Opening**

Should weather conditions make it necessary to close school or open school at a later time in the day, the local radio stations will carry such information. All school closings and announcements of a two hour delayed opening will be aired on these stations:

<b>WHUD (100.7 FM)</b>	<b>WRWD (1370 AM)</b>
<b>WGNV (1220 AM)</b>	<b>WPDH (101.5 FM)</b>

You will also receive a recorded phone message if your phone numbers are registered in the **Alert Now** system.

### **Close of School When in Session**

As soon as we find out that students will be dismissed early, we will contact all parents or emergency contacts of each child.

No child will be dismissed until either the parent/guardian or emergency person has been contacted.

You will also receive a recorded phone message on the district's **Alert Now** system if your phone numbers are accurate and registered in our system.

### **Child Abuse Laws**

Under NY State Law, school officials are responsible to report to the proper agency for any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. In so reporting, no allegation is made against a parent or caregiver. Rather, it is a judgment by the school that the child may be presenting signs of abuse or neglect. All school personnel are considered Mandated Reporters under child safety law. This means they are obligated to call on a suspected case of child abuse or maltreatment no matter what.

If an abuse call is made outside of school, it is the responsibility of the school to allow Child Protective Services personnel to visit with the child during the school day.

## **Dress Code**

All children are expected to dress in age appropriate clothing that is suitable for school. Clothing that has offensive slogans or pictures on it are not to be worn in school as this distracts from the main purpose of school, which is learning in a safe and happy environment.



Clothing should also be modest, not revealing the private parts of the child's body. Shoes should be safe for going up and down the stairs of the school. Therefore high heels, flip-flops and backless sandals should not be worn to school as they inhibit the fast and safe evacuation of the school building.

## **Electronic Devices and Toys**

Any electronic devices such as CD players, Game Boy, DS games, Cell Phones, etc. that distract from learning should be left at home. Since these devices are expensive, we cannot assume responsibility for them if they are lost or stolen. Toys are generally not brought to school unless they are a part of a school project. In that event you will receive a directive from your child's teacher.



## **Emergency Situations**

In the event of a school emergency such as fire, bomb threat, intruder threat, and certain terror alert situations, the school will be locked down, locked out or evacuated. Evacuated students will be sent to designated areas to wait for clearance. Parents receive a detailed emergency plan each year. Students receive instructions and practice in these emergency drills each year.

## **Fire and Safety Drills**

New York State Education Law requires that twelve fire drills be held throughout the school year to prepare students for a safe and orderly building evacuation should an emergency arise. Other safety drills include:



**Sheltering drills, evacuation drills, bomb threat procedures, intruder drills.** It is expected that all children will be quiet and orderly during the drills and follow directions when given. Parents can assist with safety by talking to their children at home about these safety procedures.

## **Lost and Found**

Articles that are found are put in the Lost and Found Box located in the gym, where the owner can claim them. Please label your child's personal items such as lunchbox, sneakers, jackets and backpacks. Parents are welcome to go through the box in search of lost items.

## **Money**

Money that is brought to school for a specific purpose, (class trip, book fair, lunch), must be put into an envelope with the child's name, grade, teacher and amount. The school cannot be responsible for lost or misplaced money.

## **Morning Routines**

Children from each class take turns leading the school, over the PA system, in The Pledge of Allegiance and a patriotic song. At times we observe a Moment of Silence for special situations. All are expected to stand and show proper respect for this exercise.

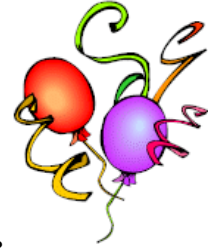


## **Monthly Calendar / Notices**

A monthly calendar of events is posted on the school Web Site and also sent home prior to the beginning of each month to keep parents informed of all of the holidays, trips and school functions. The school menu is also posted. All school notices are sent home in the child's class folder. Parents are asked to review this folder each night to keep up with school and class events.

## **Parties and Invitations**

Children enjoy celebrating their birthdays in school with their friends in class. Parents who wish to have a party should contact the classroom teacher to make the appropriate arrangements.



If you are planning a party at home, we ask that party invitations be mailed to a child's home and not distributed at school. For the safety of our children, please remember that we **cannot** give out student addresses or phone numbers. Class list forms will be distributed. Only the information that is listed on the completed forms will be shared with your child's class. If party invitations are sent in anyway, they **must** include all students in the class.

Parents may also work with the classroom teachers to plan other special parties and events to celebrate seasonal holidays.

## **School Pictures**

During the year, all children will have an opportunity to have their school picture taken. A class photo is also taken. There is no obligation to purchase the pictures.

## **Transfer to Another School**

If you are transferring out of this school, please contact the Main Office and give the following information:

1. Last day the child will attend this school
2. New school, name, address and phone number
3. New home address and phone number

When you go to another school you will sign a release of records form that they forward to our school. We then send copies of all school records to the receiving school. If your child is receiving special services through the Committee on Special Education (CSE) you must also sign a release that includes those records to be forwarded to the school.

## **Volunteers**

Parents, guardians, grand parents and community members are an integral part of our school community. All are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom, lunchroom, on field trips, through participation in the PTF, or any way that you and your child's teacher can think of to benefit our school program. You can make a difference! We look forward to working with you.

# PARENTS

## Parent Involvement

At the Fort Montgomery Elementary School, parents are an integral part of the education of the children. Parents are welcome to serve as classroom and playground helpers. They participate in raising funds for the school, assist the teachers in supervising field trips and contribute their valuable advice at any time. We are always open to suggestions that make our school a better educational institution.



## PTF Organization

The PTF (Parents, Teachers, Friends) Organization provides an effective channel of communication between parents and the school for the benefit of the children and the whole community. Its main purposes are:

- To create mutual support and understanding between home and school and thus bring about a total learning environment for children
- To provide a means of keeping parents informed about school activities, programs, etc.
- To assist the school in providing special activities, events and materials for the students.

Parents are encouraged to attend the monthly PTF Meetings as an active part of their children's education.

## Child Custody

Custodial parents are entitled to receive original sets of report cards, school and special events notices, school calendars, etc.

In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents are generally entitled to receive duplicate sets of report cards, school and special event notices, school calendars, etc. Such parents may be asked to supply the teacher with self-addressed stamped envelopes for convenience and expediency.

Non-custodial parents may pick up a child only if previous arrangements have been made and with the knowledge and consent of the custodial parent.

If there is a court order preventing the non-custodial parent from contact with a child, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide a copy of that court order for the school.

## **Communication**

Since as parents you are the child's first teacher, you are our partners in education. Therefore, regular communication with you is an essential part of your child's school experience. Scheduled parent conferences allow teachers and parents to discuss the child's achievement as well as to develop means to assist students in areas of difficulty.

A parent may request a meeting with a teacher at any time by simply sending a note to the teacher in question and the teacher will arrange for this meeting outside class time at a mutually convenient time. The meeting should take place in the classroom or some place that insures privacy, never in a hallway or outside the school. A parent who is refused such a meeting should notify the principal. Parents are not permitted beyond the office and into the classroom area during the school day without the permission of the principal. If a parent is serving as a volunteer or visitor to the class, he/she must sign in at the office and wear a name badge while in the school.

## **Parent's Right to Review Records**

The Family Educational Rights, and Privacy Act of 1974 gives the parents and all students over eighteen years of age the right to see, correct and control access to student records. The law considers all information directly related to the student and maintained by the institution as educational records and makes no distinction between behavioral and progress records. Parents are asked to make an appointment to view their child's permanent record file at the Fort Montgomery Elementary School.

## **Parent / Home Cooperation With the School**

Because The Fort Montgomery Elementary School strives to be a community school, parental cooperation and support for the school program are essential. While the school is excellent in many areas, no persons within the school are perfect and problems will occur. Parents or family members who experience any problem with their children's education or with school procedures are asked to *respectfully* approach the school principal who will take time to further investigate problems or clarify school procedures. In this way positive solutions will be reached.



Parents are asked to use the following procedures to express their concern over a school matter:

- ◆ If the problem involves routine procedures such as homework, class work, classroom behavior, student-to-student problems, or student to teacher problems, the parent should first contact the teacher by appointment.
- ◆ If the problem is of a more serious nature, the parent should inform the principal of the situation in writing, via telephone or email. Due to job responsibilities, the principal may not be immediately available to see parents. Parents may need to wait to see the principal or make an appointment for a meeting at a time convenient for all parties.

All staff members at the Fort Montgomery Elementary School work together to ensure:

- Prompt attention to problems.
- Privacy in discussing matters.
- Professional courtesy and respect when problem are presented.
- Sincere effort to resolve problems so that the community atmosphere is maintained at all times.

Using these procedures, parents are expected to demonstrate appropriate conduct at all times in dealing with the school administrator, teachers, staff and other members of the school community. Thus, the following misconduct by parents or family members is unacceptable:

- Assaulting or harassing any staff member, parent, or student.
- Threatening or physically intimidating any staff member, parent, or student.
- Verbally abusing any staff member, parent, or student,
- Engaging in any behavior such as but not limited to the above.

Such misconduct by parents or family members may lead to a warning and/or the following actions by the school:

- Requiring that persons exhibiting poor behavior have another person represent them on school matters for the remainder of the school year.
- In extreme cases, and with the approval of the superintendent, involving the police in the situation.

## **Policy of Non-Discrimination**

Highland Falls-Fort Montgomery Central School District will admit students of any race to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at each school. HFFMCSD will not discriminate on the basis of race, nationality, color, creed, or sex in the administration of educational policy, employment of personnel, admission policy, academic programs, and athletic or other school administered programs.

Inquiries concerning the application of this policy on non-discrimination, or complaints of discrimination, under any of the above referenced basis may be directed to Mrs. Barbara Fleming, Personnel Coordinator, PO Box 287, Highland Falls, New York 10928 or at 845 446-9575, ext. 227, the individual designated to coordinate the district's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX Section 504/ the ADA and the Age Discrimination Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, disability and age respectively.

## **DISCIPLINE**

An important part of education is to teach each child self-discipline. We at the Fort Montgomery Elementary School do this by allowing each student to make choices while emphasizing that he/she is responsible for the results of those choices. Cooperation between the school and parents is essential. The classroom teacher is always available to discuss any questions or problems that may arise.

It is sometimes necessary for the school to take a firm stand on certain issues, particularly when a child's behavior infringes on the rights of others. For ordinary discipline problems, the classroom teacher handles the situation, calling the parent when it is necessary. Students are given specific warnings by the teachers, in the form of written **Behavioral Referrals or Incident Reports**.

More serious discipline problems involve the principal in determining what consequence will be given for the action. The parents are also involved. **Behavioral Referrals** that are given for extreme misbehavior may result in a school suspension. If a student has been suspended, the parents will be called to inform them. It is mandatory for the parent to come to school for a conference before the student is readmitted.

### **Uncontrollable Behavior**

If a student is out of control, preventing others from learning or hurting others, the parent will be called to remove the student from school. This includes serious temper tantrums, throwing things, yelling or crying uncontrollably, etc. A parent conference will follow to determine appropriate follow-up action.

### **Code of Conduct**

The Highland Falls/Fort Montgomery School District is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment where quality educational services are delivered to students without disruption or interference. Responsible behavior by students, teachers, staff, parents, and visitors is essential to achieving this goal.

District guidelines provide a set of expectations for conduct on school property and at school functions. These expectations are based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, character, tolerance,

honesty, and integrity. Parents/guardians receive a copy of the highland Falls-Fort Montgomery District Code of Conduct at the beginning of each school year.

It is sometimes necessary for the school to take a firm stand on certain issues, particularly when a student's behavior infringes on the rights of others. At the Fort Montgomery Elementary School we consider the following offenses serious enough to warrant more serious disciplinary action:

- ❖ Disrespect to school personnel including abusive language and threats to their welfare
- ❖ Extreme or habitual misconduct
- ❖ Extreme behaviors that prevent the normal functioning of the classroom
- ❖ Fighting in the school building, on school property or on the school bus
- ❖ Intentionally damaging or destroying personal, school or district property, including school busses. (Parents are required to pay for damages.)
- ❖ Indecent exposure, that is, exposure to sight of the private parts of the body in an indecent manner.
- ❖ Possessing a weapon, displaying what appears to be a weapon, or threatening to use any weapon or dangerous instruments.
- ❖ Threatening or causing physical harm to others
- ❖ Cursing, using profane language or gestures
- ❖ Extreme teasing, bullying
- ❖ Throwing stones, rocks, ice or snow or other things at others

All consequences are determined by:

- The student's age
- The nature of the offense and the circumstances which led to the offense
- The student's prior disciplinary record
- The effectiveness of other forms of discipline
- Information from parents, teachers, and/or others as appropriate
- Other extenuating circumstances
- Discretion of the building administrator or superintendent of schools

## **Harassment**

Harassment regulations are grounded in the belief that all persons have a right to be treated with dignity. All demeaning behavior is prohibited.

Fort Montgomery Elementary School provides a safe environment for all. Threats made against the physical or emotional well being of any individual are taken seriously. Students making such threats, even in fun, face appropriate disciplinary action. Harassment of any type is not tolerated. The principal will investigate all complaints of harassment. If you believe that your child is being harassed, please notify the principal immediately. Teachers, also, should report threats made against themselves to the principal.

## **School Bus Safety**

The Highland Falls-Fort Montgomery Central School District considers each and every bus to be an extension of the school itself. Because of safety for students, the school district provides busing for all students in grades K-2.

Students are expected to follow these guidelines when riding the school bus:

- Go directly to your seat once you board the bus, sit down and stay seated until you arrive at school or home.
- Avoid walking around or standing while the bus is in motion.
- Keep hands and head from an open window.
- Cooperate with the bus driver at all times.
- Talk in a normal tone without distracting the driver, yelling and screaming can distract the driver.
- Fighting is not allowed at any time. Report conflicts to the driver.
- The emergency door and window are touched only in an emergency
- Respect other students' property while riding the bus.
- Move away from the bus once you get off.
- Report any damage in the bus immediately to the driver.

Riding privileges may be suspended for improper behavior. When behavior is so poor as to be a danger to the health and safety of a student, other students or bus driver, extended suspension of bus privileges will be in place.