

Sandy Hook School

HANDBOOK

2016 - 2017



For the parents of
SANDY HOOK SCHOOL

12 Dickinson Drive
Sandy Hook, Connecticut 06482
(203) 426-7657

Principal: Dr. Kathleen Gombos

Assistant Principal: Mr. Tim Napolitano

**Think You Can
Work Hard
Get Smart
Be Kind
Have Fun**

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the Newtown Public Schools, a partnership of students, families, educators and community, is to

INSPIRE EACH STUDENT TO EXCEL

in attaining and applying the knowledge, skills and attributes

that lead to personal success while becoming a contributing member of a dynamic global community.

We accomplish this by creating an unparalleled learning environment characterized by:

High expectations

Quality instruction

Continuous improvement



August 29, 2016

Dear SHS Families,

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone home! This is the start of an exciting new school year. Many of our PTA volunteers have been working diligently this summer getting things ready for our return. There are still opportunities for involvement and we want to give you every opportunity to put your talents to good use.

Enclosed in this packet, you will find a PTA membership brochure as well as a list of activities and committees that the PTA sponsors throughout the year. When completing your membership form, please take a moment to read over the list and decide which activities/committees suit your talents, interests and time constraints for this school year. We have been very fortunate to have many committee chairs come forward early for most of our programs. Many thanks to those of you who have already volunteered your time – we cannot operate without your support!

All of our upcoming programs and events, along with a list of PTA volunteers needed to run these programs are in our weekly newsletter, *The SHS Connection*. Please make every effort to read *The Connection*. It is a wealth of knowledge and our primary source of getting information to our families.

We are fortunate enough to have a principal and school staff that wholeheartedly supports our PTA. We expect to have nearly 100% membership from our staff. Please show your support this year by joining the PTA and supporting our efforts for your children. There is something for everyone. Note, a school directory will be included with each PTA membership.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions. We are looking forward to working with you all this year.

**Regards,
Julia Crisci and Sue Shortt
PTA Presidents**

Sandy Hook School
K-4 Schedule

Regular School Day	9:05 a.m - 3:37 p.m.
2 Hour Delayed Opening	11:05 a.m. - 3:37 p.m.
Planned Early Dismissal	9:05 a.m. - 1:37 p.m.
Emergency Early Dismissal	9:05 a.m. - 1:07 p.m.

Communication

Main Line	(203) 426-7657
Attendance Line	(203) 426-7658
Fax	(203) 270-3658
Newtown Public Schools	(203) 426-7600
All-Star Transportation	(203) 304-9779
Education Connection	(860) 567-0863

E-mail

All Sandy Hook School staff have Newtown email accounts. The addresses are the last name and first initial followed by @newtown.k12.ct.us. Staff check their emails daily. Email is an efficient means for communication and is a wonderful tool for general information and quick answers. Confidentiality and fully responding to a parent concern is always a priority and therefore email may not always be the most appropriate method of communication for certain situations. Multiple back and forth emails eliciting more questions is a good sign that a phone call or conference is best. Please know that staff may not always have access to their email and messages may be inadvertently blocked.

by our spam filter. If you do not hear back, please contact again. Please note that email may not be monitored when school is not in session.

Attendance

Except in cases of illness or emergencies, every effort should be made to have your child at school and on time so that he/she may gain the greatest benefit from the instructional program and participate with his/her peers in school activities. Frequent absences and/or tardiness are detrimental to the child's intellectual, social, and emotional development. Absences and tardiness are recorded on the student's permanent record.

As a result of the enactment of Connecticut State Legislation, Public Act 11-136, Newtown Public Schools has revised its regulations regarding student attendance and definitions of excused and unexcused absences.

The entire statute is on our school website for you to review, however, below is a brief summary of key elements:

- If a student is not in the building, regardless of the reason, they are marked absent
- Absences are either *Excused* or *Unexcused* based on the number or the reason
- Absences 1-9 are automatically *Excused*, regardless of the reason, as they are at the discretion of the parent
- The school will send you a Form Letter at absence #6 to keep you updated
- The school will send you a Form Letter at absence #9 informing you that documentation will be needed to Excuse future absences (if not *Excused* then they are marked *Unexcused*)
- The State outlines strict guidelines as to what is deemed *Excused* (after 9 absences) as well as needed documentation
- After the 9th absence, if there are four *Unexcused* absences in one month or ten in the school year, administration will ask for a parent meeting to discuss attendance as well as next steps including a possible referral to the District Attendance Board
- The school will not prepare school work for vacations outside of the school calendar. Students will make up missed work upon return.

Please keep in mind that this Statute and guidelines were put into place to address Chronic Truancy. They are not designed to deter parents into sending sick children to

school or miss a day for a family obligation. If you have any questions or specific situations that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Attendance Check

Parents are to call the school by 8:30 a.m. for each day their child/children will be absent from school for any reason. To report your child's absence, please dial the school's attendance line by calling **203-426-7658**. Please state your child's name, teacher's name and a brief reason for absence. If a parent does not report an absence, a staff member will contact you in the morning to see if the child is at home. Please remember to call voicemail.

Buses

As of August 1, 2016, information regarding bus routes is available on the All Star Transportation website (www.allstartransportation.com) as well as in The Newtown Bee's Back to School Issue, usually the second week of August. Bus forms, such as Alternate Bus Request or Drop Off Waiver (no adult to be present at bus stop) are available on the Sandy Hook School Website.

A seat on a bus is provided to each student by the school district. Children are to be at the bus stop ten minutes prior to bus arrival time. An adult needs to be at the bus stop when a child is dropped off unless a permission waiver is filled out. In the event an adult is not there and a 20 waiver has not been filled out, the child will be returned to school to await pickup by a parent.

Pupils must ride their assigned buses and are not permitted to change buses for playdates. A student is allowed to ride a different bus for day care purposes only if a request form has been submitted to the bus company and approved. Again, both forms are available on the SHS website.

Bus Behavior

The bus driver is fully occupied driving the bus and alert to traffic, pedestrians, and other hazards. Therefore, it is particularly important that children abide by the following rules of safety and courtesy:

- Students should sit by age/grade level with kindergartners in the front of the bus and 4th graders in the back
- Students must remain seated, face forward, and keep their feet out of the aisles
- Students keep their hands to themselves and are not to touch other students or their property
- Only appropriate language and quiet, calm behavior shall be permitted on the bus
- Electronic devices are to be left at home
- Bus windows shall only be opened with the consent of the driver
- Students must keep their arms and heads inside the bus
- Students shall assist in keeping the bus clean and orderly and shall refrain from causing any damage to the bus
- If a student is not to ride home on the bus on a particular day, please notify the school by note. If a child is to attend an after school meeting for multiple weeks, only one note is needed.

Bus Consequences

The bus driver will report any student who violates any of the above regulations to the school. The Principal/Assistant Principal will meet with and review procedures and expectations with the student. A parent meeting may be required if difficulties with behavior continue.

The principal may assign a seat or prohibit students who commit violations, either temporarily or permanently, from riding the bus. Parents will then have the full responsibility for student transportation to and from school.

To protect all students: Parents are not allowed to board our school buses. If you need to speak to the driver, please contact the transportation office at 203-304-9779.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

Possession of cell phones or other electronic devices during school hours is not permitted. Students who bring such devices to school will be referred to the Principal and will receive a warning not to bring electronic devices to school. Electronic devices will be held by the office for parent pick up. Repeated offenses will result in further consequences.

SHS is not be responsible for lost or broken toys/electronics.

Conferences

Every parent will have the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher during fall Parent-Teacher Conferences. This is an opportunity to discuss the transition to and the expectations of the new grade level as well as student strengths, weaknesses, and goals for the year.

In March, we set aside some time for Teacher-Requested Parent-Teacher Conferences. This follows our midyear assessments and gives us an opportunity to have a conversation with parents about student progress in the event there is a concern.

If you would like to discuss your child's progress or have questions, other than the normally scheduled conference times, we will be happy to meet with you. Feel free to contact the classroom teacher at any time throughout the school year to set a mutually convenient time.

Discipline

In order to achieve the goal of cognitive achievement, mastery of the curriculum for all students, we must teach students to use the process skills of decision making, problem solving and critical thinking. By teaching students how to take responsibility for their learning, they will become self-directed learners who will be active participants in the learning process.

At SHS we try to foster appropriate behavior through structure and routine and by educating the students about safety, respect, problem-solving, cooperation, and good citizenship. It is our hope that we can help the students learn to better understand the impact of and to take responsibility for their actions. Parental support and cooperation is needed.

We want students to learn how to:

- * Solve problems in a thoughtful way
- * Communicate with adults and peers in a courteous manner
- * Admit to and learn from mistakes
- * Accept the consequences for poor decisions

Dismissal and Drop Off Procedures

Drop Off Procedures

Parents bringing students to school should drop them off at the designated parent drop-off area between at 8:55 a.m. and 9:05 a.m. Staff will be present to safely cross students into the building.

Afternoon Pick-Up Procedures

If your child is being picked up at the end of the day, the following procedures must be followed:

- It is essential that you send a note to the school if you are going to pick up your child.
- If your child is going home with someone other than a parent, or if your child is going to a special activity such as Brownies, Scouts, etc. the note should be addressed to the teacher and should be dated and include the child's first and last name.
- SHS is a large school and the office is often very busy. Last-minute calls at the end of the day have caused confusion and miscommunication. It is essential that parents send a note in with your child in the morning whenever he/she is going to be a pick-up.
- Students being picked up will report to the Library at 3:37 and will meet parents there. Parents will enter through the PreK/K entrance (door 2). A Sandy Hook staff member will release your child to you.

Early Pick-Up Requests

Picking up children before the normal dismissal time is strongly discouraged. We realize there may be occasions when there is the need to take your child out of school before the regular dismissal time due to doctor's appointments or family emergencies. If you find it necessary to pick up your child early, please send a note in with your child.

Parents picking up early should go to the office before 3:30pm to sign their child out. Under no circumstances should you walk directly to the classroom to get your child. Teachers have been instructed to not to dismiss students from the classroom. The office will call for your child.

The period from 3:20pm until the end the school day is probably the busiest time of day both in the classroom and the office. Therefore, any **unscheduled pick-ups without a prior note, that occur at/after 3:20 will follow regular pick-up procedures** and students will be dismissed from the library.

Dress Code Guidelines

A student's appearance has a direct impact on an individual's pride and consequently, on academic behavior. Poor hygiene can be a health hazard to the individual and the rest of the class. Therefore, we encourage parents to play a strong role in deciding how their children dress and in ensuring that they are neat and clean whenever they come to school. Children may not wear any clothing that may be disruptive to the educational process.

Emergency Contacting System

At the beginning of the school year every family is asked to complete a form supplying the school with the phone numbers necessary to contact the parents and/or other local adults they designate to be responsible for their children in the case of an early dismissal. An outreach calling system (School Messenger) will be placed in effect to notify parents of an early dismissal or crisis situation. It is important that the office be notified if any work, home or emergency contact phone numbers are changed during the year.

Emergency School Closings/Delayed Openings/Early Dismissals

The following plan has been developed in order to serve all students, parents, and staff members when weather conditions or emergency situations warrant the closing of school or changing of school hours.

1. The Superintendent of Schools, after consulting with local town officials responsible for maintaining roads, will make a decision regarding the closing of school, having a delayed opening or closing school early.
2. A School Messenger Emergency call is made using the numbers you listed on the Student Emergency Sheet filled out at the beginning of each school year.
3. These decisions will also be announced by radio stations and TV stations as well as the District and school website.
4. Please do not call school officials, police departments, and radio stations as these lines must be kept open for emergency business.
5. Please do not call the school.
6. It is imperative that parents develop an alternate plan for the safety of children in the event school is delayed or dismissed early without prior warning. This plan should be discussed with your child in advance. Students CANNOT be brought and left at school in these instances as there is no staff assigned to supervise them.

Emergency Drills

In order to ensure the safety of our students and staff, Sandy Hook Elementary School coordinates with district security advisors, as well as local agencies, in implementing emergency drills as required by state statute. Scheduling and practicing a variety of drills throughout the year ensures that students and staff know how to respond should an emergency arise.

We are also committed to maintaining a warm and nurturing environment that welcomes students and provides peace of mind for parents. We encourage you to reinforce our effort to teach children (in an age appropriate way) the importance of preparedness and awareness of personal safety.

During the first month of school, we will have two Fire Drills, the first being within the first 3 days of school. As part of the second fire drill later in September, teachers will then escort students to locate the paths to our secondary evacuation area. Both of these drills will be announced to students prior to being held. Our goal is to ensure that all students feel safe and supported as we work through these first practices. After this,

fire drills will be held periodically throughout the year and, typically, will be unannounced.

In addition to fire drills, we are required by law to practice at least one crisis response drill per quarter. The following drills will be practiced at Sandy Hook this year:

Shelter In Place: Staff and students are directed to a securable location such as a classroom, library or gymnasium to await additional directions. Campus is closed to visitors for the duration.

High Wind Drill: Students and staff are directed to previously identified areas within the building that will offer the greatest protection in a high wind weather event.

Lock-In: Students and staff are kept within the confines of the building but are free to move about and conduct business as usual. Depending on the emergency, the campus may be closed to visitors.

Lock-Down: This entails being in locked rooms and out of eyesight from doors and windows. Students and staff will walk through what to do in an imminent emergency that presents physical danger.

We recognize that participation in drills may be particularly challenging to some children. Should you need to discuss specific concerns regarding your child's ability to participate in drills or have your own questions, please feel free to contact the school.

Field Trips

At the beginning of each year you will be asked to complete a Field Trip/Medical form for each child in your family. This form was devised by our town nurses as a result of state recommendations, and is for the protection of your child. A brief medical update is included on our individual Field Trip form that is sent home for your signature prior to a field trip. Please use it to inform the school of any changes and/or additions which are important for the school to know about your child's health before he/she leaves the school on a field trip. Children will not be permitted to go on a field trip unless the form is completed.

Field trips are an integral part of the school program. When a field trip is planned, you will be notified of the place, date, time and other pertinent information, and you will be asked to sign a permission slip for each field trip activity. We try to keep the cost of trips to a minimum, however, if the cost of a field trip presents a problem for you, please feel

free to contact your child's teacher or the principal. It is the school's policy that students in grades K-4 do not bring spending money. Parents wishing to chaperone must have a Volunteer Form completed and on file with the school.

Games

In general, toys should not be brought to school since they are often disruptive to the classroom and the school cannot be responsible if toys are broken or lost.

- Pokemon and other trading cards are not allowed
- Toys that may cause injury on a busy playground such as skateboards, kites, hard Frisbees, hard balls (baseballs and footballs), and bats are not allowed in school under any circumstances
- Only soft, Nerf-type sports equipment is allowed
- Electronic toys and other devices are not allowed in school. This includes such items as iPods and tablets

SHS is not be responsible for lost or broken toys/electronics.

Health

If your child has a communicable disease please notify the school immediately. If your child has been exposed to a communicable or contagious disease, the school will notify you.

Please notify the teacher and nurse of any allergies to foods or environment (bee stings, sugar, milk, nuts, etc.).

Exclusion for Contagious Diseases

During the course of the school year, children contract many of the familiar children's diseases. The following list includes some of the most common diseases requiring exclusion:

<i>Chicken Pox:</i>	Exclude 7 days after the first eruption.
<i>Rubella:</i>	Exclude for at least 4 days after respiratory symptoms appear, isolate from women in their first three months of pregnancy.
<i>Measles:</i>	Exclude for at least 5-10 days after the rash has appeared.
<i>Mumps:</i>	Exclude for as long as swelling persists.

<i>Ringworm:</i>	Exclude until appropriate treatment has been started.
<i>Impetigo:</i>	Exclude until appropriate treatment has been started or recovery.
<i>Conjunctivitis:</i>	Exclude until under treatment or (pink eye) recovered.
<i>Scabies:</i>	Exclude until under treatment or recovered.
<i>Lice:</i>	Exclude until appropriate treatment has been given; child should be checked periodically by the nurse on return to school.
<i>Respiratory Infections:</i>	Exclude from school if fever is present and/or productive secretions are evident (cough or nasal discharge).

General Health Suggestions

1. Sick children having a temperature of 100° or above, vomiting, or having an earache, etc., will be sent home at the discretion of the school nurse and/or personnel.
2. First aid will be given if your child is injured at school. If an ambulance or further medical attention is necessary, we will attempt to notify you immediately.
3. Please send your emergency telephone number into the office at the beginning of the school year on the form we send home.
4. Children with rashes may be excluded pending diagnosis.
5. A child should have a normal temperature for 24 hours before returning to school after an illness.
6. Please send a note of explanation of illness to the school with your child after each absence.
7. Parents should notify the school nurse if their child has a contagious disease.
8. Parents are responsible to report any special health problems and allergic tendencies to the school nurse. If medication is required, please inform the school nurse of the doctor's orders.
9. School personnel are not responsible for the treatment of injuries received at home.

Administration of Medication

Nurses/trained school personnel may only administer medication during school hours with the written permission of a parent and the written order of a physician. Medication forms can be obtained from the school office or nurse's office. Medication should not be transported by the student on the school bus.

Medication to be given should be brought to the school in the original prescription bottle by the parent and must be identified with the following:

- the prescription number
- the medication name
- the student's name
- the dosage
- the doctor's name
- the directions for administration

Health Service - Entrance Requirements

State regulations require **written evidence** of immunization, signed by your doctor, for the following, provided to the school **prior** to enrollment of a student.

DPT -(diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus) 4 doses, the last dose received after 4th birthday-including all kindergarten students.

Poliomyelitis - 3 doses; the last after the 4 th birthday-including all kindergarten students.

Measles, Mumps, Rubella -

Measles: Physician's verification of immunization after (12) months of age and a second vaccination before entering 7th grade. **Effective August 2000**, all students must show proof of a second vaccination before entry.

Mumps Vaccine: Physician's verification of immunization after twelve (12) months of age.

Rubella/German Measles Vaccination: Physician's verification of immunization after (12) twelve months of age.

HIB - (Haemophilus Influenzae Type B) Physician's verification of immunization on entry into kindergarten – exempt if passed his/her 5th birthday.

TB Test - This applies only to foreign & foreign born students (new entrants and Kindergarten students) entering from a high risk country.

(1): Physician's verification of a tuberculin test (Mantoux) given in the USA, including the date given and the results of the test.

Hepatitis B (HBV)

1. Physician's verification of immunization for students born after 1/1/94: 3 doses as follows – 2 doses given at least 4 weeks apart followed by a third dose at least 4 months after second.
2. Students entering the 7th grade must show proof of one dose with the completion of the series before entering 8th grade.

Varicella

1. All students born January 1, 1997 or later must show proof of immunity to varicella (chickenpox) disease for entry into licensed preschool programs and kindergarten.
2. All students entering into 7th grade must show proof of immunity to varicella.

Proof of Immunity includes any of the following:

1. Documentation of age appropriate immunization (one dose given on or after the students' first birthday if they are under 13 years of age, 2 doses given at least 30 days apart for students whose initial vaccination is at 13 years of age or older.
2. Serologic evidence of past infection
3. A statement signed and dated by a physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse indicating that the child has already had chickenpox based on family and/or medical history.

Physical examinations are also required for new entrants and students in grades 6 and 10. These physicals must include specific health information such as height, weight, blood pressure, pulse, updating of immunizations, screenings, etc. and must be performed by a legal practitioner of medicine. Forms may be obtained from your child's school or nurse's office. For additional information please contact your school nurse.

All requests for exemptions from immunizations based on religious grounds must be by written notification by the parent. Allergic reaction exemptions must be by order from a physician (MD) licensed to practice medicine in the United States.

Allergies

If your child has any allergies to food or environment, please make sure the classroom teacher and school nurse have been made aware. In extreme situations we will work

with your doctor to create a medical plan for your child. The school must ensure the safety of all its students and therefore, at times, we must ask for parent and student cooperation. Due to an increase in the number and severity of allergies in the school, parents may receive a letter at the beginning of the year informing them of food items which cannot be sent into the classroom for snacks. However, any food can be sent in with a student for lunch. Your cooperation for the safety of the children is appreciated.

Health Screenings

Vision screening is conducted for all children, while a hearing test is administered to children of grades kindergarten to third.

Homework

Homework is an important part of the instructional program. Although the classroom remains as the primary instructional center of our schools, homework assignments that are carefully planned, completed and corrected can have significant positive effects on learning.

Each grade level collaborates and coordinates as a Team. Although homework may not be identical it should be similar in type and amount. An average amount of homework each day should equal to the following:

Grades K-1: 5-15 minutes

Grades 2-3: 15-30 minutes

Grade 4: 30-45 minutes

If you find that your child is consistently spending much more time than the recommended number of minutes, or that you are required to heavily assist, please bring this to the teacher's attention.

Instructional Programs

Newtown Public Schools has a strong commitment to continuously strengthening curriculum and instruction. Students in our district receive a rich and diverse academic program. We promote a balanced education that meets students' intellectual, social, and personal needs to help them continue their pursuit of lifelong learning. We strive to prepare our students to be thoughtful, active citizens who can function productively in a

multicultural, rapidly changing, interdependent world. More detailed information about Curriculum can be found on the district's website.

SRBI (Scientific Research Based Interventions)

SRBI is the process Newtown Schools use to provide support to students. Interventions are implemented and monitored by a SRBI team. This team is an in depth child study team that meets on a regularly scheduled basis. Members of the team may consist of the following staff: classroom teacher, principal, assistant principal, psychologist, reading consultant, math/science specialist, school nurse, guidance counselor, and special education teacher. When a child is experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties, the team will develop a plan to gather additional information, provide recommendations to the classroom teacher, and suggest suitable accommodations, if needed. The classroom teacher will maintain communication with the parents regarding the difficulties the child is experiencing and the recommendations of the SRBI team. The child's progress is closely monitored, and if expected progress is not made, then a referral for special education testing may be initiated. With the parent's input and permission, students are evaluated, based on the specific concerns, to determine if additional support is required. If the student qualifies, an individualized program is developed to meet the student's academic needs.

Special Education

The Pupil Services staff, consisting of the special education teachers, school psychologist, and the speech and language pathologist, work closely with the principal, lead teacher, classroom teacher, and parents to provide assistance to children who may experience difficulty in the areas of learning, speech and language development, behavior, and social/emotional growth. Children are placed in this program after a formal referral procedure that includes educational evaluations and a PPT (Planning and Placement Team) meeting of which parents are a part. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is designed to meet the needs of students who require specialized education services, supports and instruction. The special education teachers work closely with the classroom teachers and other specialists to develop and implement a program that ensures success for all children in the regular classroom setting.

Counseling Support

The school counselor and psychologist counsel students individually and/or in small groups. Groups/topics can include but are not limited to being new to the school, divorce, anxiety, and social skills. Some of the counseling is formal and part of a

program (IEP), while other counseling can be more informal. The school counselor and psychologist also work together with teachers and other specialists as a team in developing programs for students who are exhibiting problems that may interfere with their academic progress. They assist in teaching Second Step, our social-emotional curriculum, and with working out peer conflict issues. They also will assist families that may be in need of outside services beyond the scope of the school. If you have concerns about your child's functioning, please bring these concerns to our attention. Any help or information you can give us in identifying problems that interfere with the learning process is very much appreciated.

Leaving the School Grounds

The school is responsible for the children after their arrival at school. Children are not permitted to leave the school grounds alone at any time during the school day.

Library

We encourage children to use the library facilities and also to properly take care of all books. Please stress with your children the need to return books on schedule, and emphasize the importance of caring for them.

Lost and Found

Many items belonging to children are misplaced or lost during the school year. It is suggested that you label everything ... sweaters, jackets, sneakers, boots, lunch boxes, "show and tell" items, etc. If your child misplaces anything, be sure to check the "lost and found" box located near the art room. Items in the "lost and found" boxes are removed periodically during the school year and then donations are made to local charities. Notices are sent home with the students to notify you that the "lost and found" items are being removed from the bins. Please discourage your child/children from bringing valuable items to school.

Lunch Program / Food Choices

Students will be eating lunch daily in the cafeteria. Whitson's Dining Service provides a daily lunch program, in accordance with the USDA and CT State regulations. Each lunch provides 1/3 the daily nutrients your child requires.

Student Lunch Including Milk - \$2.85 per meal
Ala carte items which can be purchased separately are:
Low Fat White and Chocolate, Skim Milk 65¢
Assorted snacks and beverages 50¢-\$1.00

The menu is published in the Newtown Bee and is also available on the Newtown BOE Webpage. Please click on the School Lunch Program tab to access the monthly menu and other related information.

If your child has a food allergy or intolerance, please forward a doctor's note indicating this information to the school nurse. The food service department will then be informed and this information will be available at the time of student meal purchasing via the POS system.

If your child has a disability which restricts his/her diet, please contact Whitson's Resident Dietician, at 203-270-6117.

Parents are encouraged to send in healthy food snacks with their child/children.

Cafeteria Point of Sale (POS) System

Each student will have a Café debit card housed in the kitchen for safely purchasing lunch, or a la carte items. Please note that the debit card will never be in the possession of your student.

We encourage parents/guardians to fund the debit card for Café transactions. By funding the card, the children are allowed to pass through the service line quickly, as there is no need for a cash exchange during the 30 minute lunch wave.

If a parent or guardian wishes to put purchasing restrictions on the child/children's lunch account, please advise the Café lead associate in writing. This information will be added to the POS system and made available during the child/children's food purchases for each service day.

Funds may be deposited to students' account via Internet at <http://www.cafeprepay.com>

Please note, that as a cost of doing business with Café Prepay, a transaction fee applies. Using Café Prepay also entitles the parent or guardian to access a "Patron

Participation” report, which indicates a child’s daily Café activities for up to a 60-day period of time. This service is available 24/7/365 to participating Cafe Prepay clients.

Student accounts may also be funded via check or cash. Please send currency or checks in a sealed envelope with the child’s full name written clearly, and instruct the child to give it to the classroom teacher to send along with the Café lunch count for that day. Payments to students’ accounts will be posted within 24 hours of receipt or sooner. Checks should be made payable to Newtown Food Services. Please be sure that your phone number is on the front of the check. **Note: Due to time constraints, cash or check payments are not accepted during actual lunch service.**

Free and Reduced Price Meal

Available to all students eligible under specific family income guidelines are free and reduced price meals. Applications are sent home the first week of school and should be returned to **Whitson’s, c/o Newtown High School, 12 Berkshire Rd., Sandy Hook, CT 06482** (attn: J.Kulikowski) no later than October 1 of the current school year. **Note: First time free or reduced meal price applicants are responsible for all Café purchases made prior to the parent/guardian receiving final written approval from the program administrator.**

For free or reduced meal recipients, unless the students’ accounts have been funded by the parent or guardian for the purpose of buying a la carte items, the child will simply be told that he/she does not have the money to purchase extra items. If you have any questions, please contact the Food Service Department at 270-6134.

Messages to Children

If it is necessary to leave a message for your child/children please notify the office. However, we encourage that interruptions (to the classroom) be for emergencies only. Please avoid dropping items that have been forgotten at home (except for eyeglasses). If your child/children have forgotten their homework it should be brought to school the next day. Also, if they have forgotten their lunch they may charge a lunch with food services.

Newspaper Publicity

Newspaper reporters occasionally visit the school to photograph or to videotape children and teachers involved in various school activities. If you prefer that your child

not be photographed, or videotaped, please indicate on the form sent home the first day of school or send a note to the school office.

Recess

Unless there is a medical reason defined by note, all children will go outdoors for recess, weather permitting. We suggest that you dress your child in clothing appropriate for work and play. During the winter months, it is particularly important that children wear warm clothing and boots, or heavy enough shoes to prevent their feet from getting cold or wet. We utilize the wind chill factor chart from the Child Care Weather Watch and we do not go outside if the windchill is below 20 degrees.

Reporting Periods

Progress Reports are issued three times a year: December, March, and June.

If you would like to discuss your child's progress or have questions, other than the normally scheduled conference times, we will be happy to meet with you. Feel free to contact the classroom teacher at any time throughout the school year to set a mutually convenient time.

Rights of Noncustodial Parents

Non-custodial parents usually have the right to see written student records; we will make them available upon request. Report cards and other regular records information will be provided for non-custodial parents who make a written request.

Insofar as parent-teacher conferences and day-to-day communications are concerned, information will be communicated to the custodial parent. It is that parent from whom we would receive recommendations or discuss what we would like done at home to support our efforts in school. If a non-custodial parent wishes to attend a regular conference, we recommend that he/she make arrangements to attend with the custodial parent, if possible.

Our main concern is with the child. We are available to discuss special circumstances and situations.

If parents have specific custody arrangements that would provide guidance to the school system about the rights or lack of rights of one of the parents to pick up the child at school, it is very important that the school be given a copy of the legal document issued by the court, and that the parent make an appointment with the building principal to discuss the agreement.

School Insurance

All students are eligible to participate in the school insurance program that is made available by an insurance company approved by the Board of Education. The cost of this plan is indicated in the company's brochure that is sent home at the beginning of the school year. ***Parents whose children are enrolled during the school year should request the brochure at the school office or access it online. While participation in the plan is voluntary, you should be advised that the school district does not carry accident insurance on the children.*** If you feel your own insurance is inadequate to cover possible injury to your child, you may wish to seriously consider this plan.

Telephone Numbers and Addresses

If your telephone number or address is changed, please notify the school office as soon as possible. This will help us to contact your home immediately in case of injury or illness. ***It is very important that you provide the name and telephone number of someone whom we may contact in the event we are unable to reach you in an emergency.***

Unified Arts

In addition to academics, your child will participate in a unified arts class one time per day.

All students in grades K-4 will have an art class one time per week. Students experiment in many media and an art smock is required. Artwork is collected throughout the year and put on display in the spring during our yearly Art Show.

All students in grades K-4 will have a library class one time per week. Literature, research, and technology are key components of lessons. We teach the students to properly take care of all books and to return them on time. We also use technology responsibly while handling with care.

All students in grades K-4 will have a music class one time per week. Lessons include reading and writing music, identifying and playing a variety of instruments, and developing a love for music. Students in grade three and four will participate in chorus.

All students in grades K-4 will have a physical education class two times per week. The focus of many of the activities is on health and cooperative play. Students must wear sneakers in the gym.

Volunteering

We love volunteers at Sandy Hook School. There are many opportunities for family members to be involved in our school community as a volunteer. Whether it is with the PTA, as a guest reader, or helping in the library or computer lab, all of our volunteers are very much appreciated.

Volunteers must complete a Volunteer Information Form and Waiver of Liability each school year. The form was sent home with each child at the beginning of the school year, but a printable copy can be downloaded from our website.

Volunteers who will be working with students without direct sight-line supervision of staff including chaperoning field trips, MUST complete a criminal history background check before interacting with students. Please contact central office for further information on completing the background check.

Newtown Public Schools General Information

Newtown Public Schools Website: <http://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/>

Newtown Public Schools Strategic Plan:

<http://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/Portals/Newtown/District/docs/District%20Information/StrategicPlan20112012.pdf>

School Calendar 2016-2017

<http://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/Portals/Newtown/District/docs/District%20Information/calendar%20-%202016-2017%20final%20approved%20Jan.%2019,%202016.pdf>

District Safe School Climate Plan

<http://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/DistrictInformation/SafeSchoolClimateDistrictPlan/tabid/98642/Default.aspx>

Newtown Board of Education Policies

The full text of all Board of Education policies may be found on the Newtown Website at the following link:

<http://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/DistrictInformation/BoardofEducation/BOEPolicies/tabid/98557/Default.aspx>