

Head O' Meadow School

Handbook

2017 – 2018



INFORMATION, GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

94 Boggs Hill Road
Newtown, CT 06470
203.426.7670

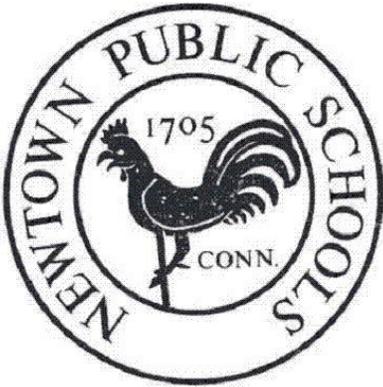
Barbara Gasparine, Principal
Carol Danenberg, Lead Teacher

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District 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

Civic responsibility

District Beliefs

We believe that:

Each individual is unique and has value.

Everyone can and will learn well.

It takes effort and persistence to achieve one's full potential.

High expectations inspire higher levels of performance.

Honesty, integrity, respect, and open communication build trust.

Quality education expands the opportunities for individuals and is vital to the success of the entire community.

Educating children is a shared responsibility of the entire community.

Family is a critical influence in each individual's development.

Understanding all forms of diversity is essential in a global society.

All individuals are responsible for their behavior and choices.

Educated and involved citizens are essential for sustaining a democratic society.

Everyone has the responsibility to contribute to the greater good of the community.

Continuous improvement requires the courage to change.

Detailed information about Newtown Public School's Mission, Beliefs, Objectives and Strategies, can be found on the District Web page (<http://www.newtown.k12.ct.us>). Look under District Information/Strategic Plan.

Philosophy of Head O' Meadow School

Head O' Meadow School ... a place where action is based on commitment to our students, and guided by the Newtown Strategic Plan.

Head O' Meadow School ... a place where learning is:

- The product of work and discipline, based on the principles of continuous improvement
- Enjoyable and extends beyond the classroom
- Spiral in nature and connected through the curriculum
- The springboard for inquiry and life-long process

Head O' Meadow School ... a place where the principal:

- Is a leader, a learner, and a partner in teaching
- Fosters communication, cooperation and collaboration at the building and district level
- Continuously directs the course of action to insure educational excellence

Head O' Meadow School ... a place where teachers are leaders who:

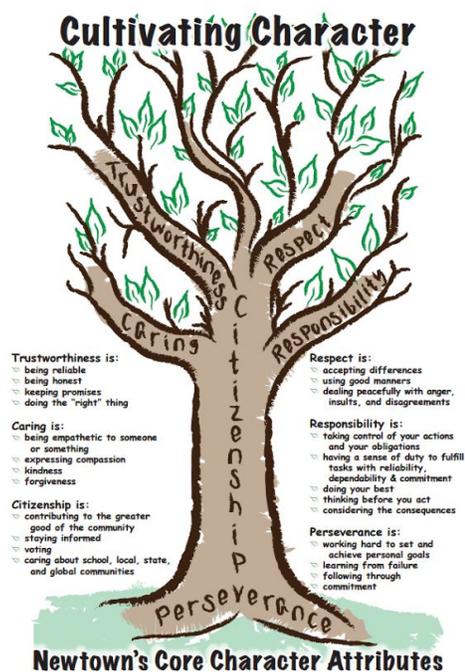
- Are also learners, pursuing professional growth and success
- Work cooperatively in teams to solve problems and improve instruction
- Manage curriculum content and facilitate and guide instruction
- Excite and encourage students in pursuit of educational excellence
- Create an atmosphere that encourages cooperation, teamwork, problem solving, goal setting and self-evaluation
- Communicate and collaborate to foster the home-school connection

Head O' Meadow School ... a place where parents are partners who:

- Support their children's learning
- Demonstrate interest in school life
- Communicate regularly with school personnel
- Understand the importance of nurturance as it impacts education

Head O' Meadow School ... a place where students are workers who:

- Are actively involved in learning the curriculum
- Are self-motivated and self-disciplined
- Strive for success through quality work
- Take academic risks
- Make decisions and solve problems
- Challenge themselves to imagine new questions and actively seek the answers
- Are prepared to absorb new ideas and adapt to change
- Cooperate and collaborate with peers
- Appreciate strengths and differences in themselves and others
- Respect themselves, others and property



From the Desk of Mrs. Gasparine



Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2017/2018 school year! The Newtown Public Schools are committed to quality education, academic excellence and continuous improvement. Our school community can only achieve excellence with cooperation, dedication and the combined efforts of parents, students and educators. As parents in our learning community you are valued partners in your child's education. Together in partnership we can develop a strong foundation of learning for our children. At Head O' Meadow, the staff and parents are committed to providing a nurturing and caring environment where all students can learn. Head O' Meadow is a place where students are encouraged to continually strive for academic success. The Parent Teacher Association is an integral component of our school community. Parental involvement is encouraged and appreciated. The Head O' Meadow School handbook lists many of the activities that enrich the educational experience for our children. It also includes school policies and procedures to maintain safety and efficiency at our school. Please read this handbook carefully and keep it for reference throughout the school year. If you have any questions, please contact our school office at 203-426-7670.

Best wishes for a most successful school year.

Barbara Gasparine

School Schedules

Regular School Day	9:05 AM - 3:37 PM
2 Hour Delayed Opening	11:05 AM - 3:37 PM
Planned Early Dismissal	9:05 AM - 1:37 PM
Emergency Early Dismissal	9:05 AM - 1:07 PM

On Emergency Early Dismissal days, we do our best to make sure the students get lunch. Please note: lunch may not be served to students depending on when the early dismissal is announced.

COMMUNICATION

Directory

Main Office	203-426-7670
Attendance Line	203-426-7672
FAX	203-270-4559
Newtown Public Schools	203-426-7600
All-Star Transportation	203-304-9779
Food Services	203-426-7637
Ed Advance	860-567-0863

E-mail

All Head O'Meadow staff have Newtown e-mail accounts. The addresses are the last name and first initial followed by: @newtown.k12.ct.us. Staff check their e-mails daily and will respond to parent questions within a 24 hour period, as long as it is not a weekend, holiday or vacation.



E-mail 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 e-mail and messages may be inadvertently blocked by our spam filter. If you do not hear back, please contact again.

Please note that e-mail may not be monitored when school is not in session.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Every parent will have the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher during fall Parent-Teacher Conferences. ***This year the dates are October 24-27, 2017.*** 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 touch-base conversation with parents about student progress in the event there is a concern. ***These will occur on March 15-16, 2018.***

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.

Progress Reports

Every student will receive a Standards-Based Progress Report three times per year, usually in December, March, and June. Interim Reports may be issued in between, as needed, for students of concern. Parents can access Progress Reports through Power School.

Voice Mail

You can leave a teacher a voice message by calling the school and entering their extension. Teachers are asked to check voice mails daily and return phone calls within a 24 hour period before or after school or during their planning period (teacher discretion).

Please note that voice mail may not be monitored when school is not in session.

Website

Most information can be found on the Head O'Meadow School website. From dates to remember and schedules; to attendance, lunch and bus information; from reading, math and school climate information; to the school directory, teacher websites, fun school pictures, and access to the Parent Portal as well as the PTA.

The Head O'Meadow website can be located at the following link:

<http://head.newtown.schooldesk.net/>

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

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 multi-cultural, 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, lead teacher, reading consultant, math/science specialist, school nurse, school counselor, school psychologist or other pupil services personnel.

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.

Special Education

Children may be referred to the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) when considering whether or not a student will be eligible for special education services. This is a formal procedure of which parents play an integral role. With parent's input and permission, students are evaluated, based on the specific concerns, to determine if specialized instruction is required. If the student is deemed eligible, an individualized program is developed.

Head O'Meadow school is committed to providing a continuum of specialized instruction for students with disabilities that affords them the opportunity to meet the demands of the general curriculum. Through the collaboration of special and regular education teachers and related services staff, we provide individually designed instruction that addresses both academic and social emotional learning that provides meaningful educational benefit.

Counseling Support

The school counselor and school psychologist 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.

The school counselor and school 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.

If you have concerns about your child's social/emotional development, please bring these concerns to our attention. Any help or information you can give us in identifying problems that may be impacting your child's availability to learn is very much appreciated.

Special Areas

We believe in teaching the whole child. In addition to academics, your child will participate in a special 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. The Art Show has been scheduled on May 22, 2017 (5:30-7:00PM).



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 four participate in the chorus. There are two music concerts a year - in winter and spring.



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. If at all possible, it is helpful if the child can keep a pair of sneakers in 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.**



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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. This form is made available during Open House and is also always available at the main office. Your driver's license must also have been run through our Raptor System (which occurs during every visit to the school).

District Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Newtown School District staff are dedicated to continually growing as professionals. We want our students to be lifelong learners, as are we. Therefore it is imperative to gather together periodically as a grade-level, team, or across District. To do so, we build time into the school calendar for professional development and for our staff to collaborate.

The dates for District Professional Learning Communities, for the 2016-2017 school year, are on the following dates:

Friday, October 6	2-hr Delay (11:05 AM)		Friday, February 2	2-hr Delay (11:05 AM)
Tuesday, November 7	All Day		Tuesday, March 14	Early Release (1:37 PM)
Wednesday, December 6	Early Release (1:37 PM)		Wednesday, April 4	2-hr Delay (11:05 AM)
Friday, January 12	Early Release (1:37 PM)		Friday, May 18	2-hr Delay (11:05 AM)

HEALTH

The Health Office is supervised by a registered nurse and provide emergency care for injuries and sickness that school. If further care or treatment is required the called, and the child is sent home or to a doctor. Injuries home should be seen by a physician.



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

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.

Entrance Requirements

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

1. **DPT:** (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus) 4 doses, the last dose received after 4th birthday-including all kindergarten students.
2. **Poliomyelitis:** 3 doses; the last after the 4th birthday-including all kindergarten students.
3. **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.

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

5. **TB Test** This applies only to foreign & foreign born students (new entrants and Kindergarten students) entering from a high risk country or students traveling to a high risk country while attending school.

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

6. 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.

7. 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, or
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.

General Health Suggestions



Children who are ill or show signs of becoming ill should not be sent to school. Your child cannot perform his or her best when they are ill, and we do not want to spread those germs to others. If a child becomes ill at school, parents will be notified and should provide immediate transportation.

Parents should ensure that the nurse's office has current emergency data for accident or illness in case there is no one available to pick up the child.

Emergency forms are sent home every year for updating. Please notify the nurse of subsequent changes as well as making the changes through the Parent Portal in PowerSchool.

When your child will miss school, please call the school nurse at 426-7672.

Here are some helpful guidelines:

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, without medication, for 24 hours before returning to school.
6. Please send a note of explanation of illness to school after each multi-day absence.
7. Parents should notify the school nurse if their child has a contagious disease.
8. Parents are responsible to report special health problems and allergic tendencies to the school nurse. If medication is required, please inform the nurse of the doctor's orders.
9. School personnel are not responsible for the treatment of injuries received at home.

Accidents

If your child is injured at school, first aid will be given. If medical attention is needed, you will be notified immediately and asked to come for your child. Applications for student accident insurance are sent home with children in August. Head O'Meadow School does not carry insurance on students.

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

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.

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).

In the event that you are traveling to one of the identified *High Risk* countries, the State of Connecticut requires that your child have a Tuberculosis test prior to the return of school (see TUBERCULOSIS SCREENING GUIDELINES FOR CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS- Connecticut Department of Public Health, Infectious Diseases Section- June 2011)

TRANSPORTATION



Bus Information

Information regarding bus routes is available on the All-Star Transportation website (www.all-startransportation.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 Head O'Meadow 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 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 Head O'Meadow website.

Bus Behavior

The bus driver is to be 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 kindergarteners in the front of the bus and 4th graders in the back
- Students decide where they, themselves, sit-not other students
- 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
- Food should be left off the bus
- Pets should be left off the bus
- Objects should be handled with care-not thrown
- 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 Sanctions

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

The Lead Teacher 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.***

Morning Drop-Off Procedures

Parents are encouraged to have students ride the bus to school. Students that are driven in the morning are to be dropped off at the designated area around the back side of the building around loop. **Drop off occurs between 8:45 am and 9:05 am.**

For safety, parents do not exit the car but rather pull up to the building and students exit the car on the right side and enter the building immediately. Please pull up a car length past the door to allow more students to be dropped off, moving the line faster. A staff member will be at the door to monitor safe drop off procedures.

Students are not to be dropped off at the main entrance during Drop-Off times. ***Any student dropped off after 9:05 am will need to be escorted into the building by an adult and signed-in.***

Afternoon Pick-Up Procedures

Parents are encouraged to have students ride the bus home. However, the following procedures must be followed when you pick up your child at dismissal. **Dismissal begins at 3:37 p.m.**

Parents who will be picking up their child at dismissal time will drive to the back side of the building around loop. For safety, parents do not exit the car but rather pull up to the building and students enter the car on the right side. Please pull up a car length past the door to allow more students to be picked up, moving the line faster. Students waiting to be picked up will be in the gym. Staff will be on duty to call your child to your car for pick-up. Please check your child's backpack the first day of school as we will be sending home a laminated sign with your last name printed on the front. Please display this sign on the passenger side dashboard of your car when you enter the pick-up line in the back of the building. This will help expedite the pick-up process.



If you are planning to pick up your HOM student and your Reed student on the same day, you may pick up both students at the HOM location. However, Reed shuttle buses are not expected to arrive at HOM until about 3:55. Reed students will need time to disembark and walk through the school lobby to get to the back of the building and into the gym for pick up with their sibling. Parents should not plan to get into the pick-up line behind the building until 4:00 as there won't be room for you to move your car out of the line if your Reed student has not arrived yet by bus. The alternative is that you go to Reed first to pick up your student, then come to HOM to get in the pick-up line for your younger student.

Pick up notes should be sent into school each day. If you are also planning to pick up an older sibling from Reed, it would be helpful to have that indicated on the note for our planning purposes.

Early Pick-Up Requests

Picking up children before the normal dismissal time is 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, you must sign your child out in the office and the office staff will call your child to the office. Please remember we always need written permission for your child to be picked up by another person. We ask that you notify the office as soon as possible and arrange to pick up your child before 3:15 pm. Please be advised that you are better off parking in the lower lot so that you don't get stuck as buses begin arriving for dismissal.



Visitor Parking

Parking spaces are available on a first come first served basis. However, please be aware that parking in the lot closest to the school entrance is prohibited during arrival and dismissal to ensure the safety of students.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Head O'Meadow Elementary is a community with over 270 students and over 75 adults working together every day. We can only be effective if every member of that community treats everyone else with respect.

We are a Responsive Classroom school. We take pride in building community and making positive connections Adult to Adult, Adult to Student, and Student to Student. Head O'Meadow is OUR school and we all have a responsibility to make it a clean, safe, fun place that is conducive to learning for EVERYONE!



Students are expected to be honest and polite at all times, and to work hard to persevere, to be respectful of others, work collaboratively, handle conflict using their words and not their hands, and to ask for help when needed. Please review the HOM Code of Conduct brochure with your child on repeated occasions throughout the school year.

Bullying

Bullying behavior by any student in the Newtown schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school.

‘Bullying’ means *“the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic communication directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district, that:*

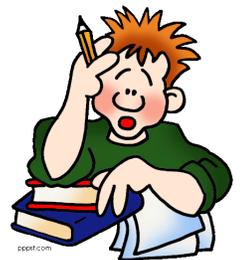
- 1) causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property;*
- 2) places such student in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;*
- 3) creates a hostile environment at school for such student;*
- 4) infringes on the rights of such student at school; or*
- 5) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.*

Students and parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying to teachers and school administrators. The mailbox to make an anonymous report of any mean behavior is located in the Library Media Center. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying are verified, disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process.

In accordance with Public Act 11-232, *An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws*, our school has developed and adopted a **Safe School Climate Plan** which is available on the school and district web sites. If you would like a hard copy of this plan, please contact our main office.

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.



Homework assignments are designed to reinforce skills and concepts that have been taught in the classroom. NO instruction should be necessary from parents. However, parents can support homework in the following ways:

- Ongoing independent reading (15-30 minutes daily) is among the most important homework your child can complete (assigned or not)
- Provide a quiet area, free of distractions
- Plan a consistent homework time daily and stick to it

- Check homework to ensure it is complete and well done
- Offer assistance as needed
- Let the teacher know of any problems your child encountered

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.

Games / Toys

- 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.
- Anything brought to school from home may not be played with during instructional time.
- Potentially harmful items should not be brought to school.



Cell Phones / Electronic Devices

Acceptable use of technology agreements must be signed off on prior to any student bringing a device from home.

HOM is not be responsible for lost or broken toys/electronic devices/cell phones.

Discipline / Consequences

At Head O'Meadow 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.

Students at Head O'Meadow School are part of a large family that includes more than 270 other children as well as over 75 teachers and staff members. We want them to learn how to:

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

Recess

We, at Head O'Meadow, feel strongly that children need time to run, play and get fresh air. We go outside for recess as often as we can. Rain, thunder, and lightning keep us inside as does a temperature below 20 degrees (that includes the wind chill factor).

Unless there is a medical reason defined by a doctor's note, all children will go outdoors for recess. We would like you to make sure that your child is dressed in clothing that is appropriate for recess. 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. Again, we go out in the winter unless the temperature is below 20 degrees.



PARENT INFORMATION

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.

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) 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

Please keep in mind that this Statute and guidelines were put into place to address Chronic Truancy. They are not designed to frighten parents into sending sick children to school or miss a day to visit a grandparent from out of state.

If you have any questions or specific situations that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Attendance Call

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 nurse's number by calling 203-426-7672. Please state your child's name, teacher's name, and a brief reason for absence. If you are to be away for multiple days on an unexpected trip, written notice covering all days can suffice. 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.

Tardiness

Punctual attendance is important; parents and guardians are responsible for assuring that students arrive to school on time. Students arriving late to school (arrival after 9:05 a.m.) will need to be signed-in at the security desk by an adult. For safety reasons, we can not have unescorted children entering the building and signing themselves in to school. We will be monitoring late arrivals closely, and tardiness will be reflected on attendance records. If there is a pattern of tardiness, school personnel will take appropriate actions beginning with a meeting with parents.

Early Dismissal

Except for illness or emergency situations, students are expected to be in school for the entire day. Students who must leave early are requested to have a signed note giving them parental permission. The student should present this note to their teacher in the morning. Parents must go to the security desk first prior to signing out students who are leaving early.

Make-Up Work (For procedures related to Trips see Section below)

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure their child attends school except when too ill or in those specific situations defined by State of Connecticut law and Board of Education policy-See Above.

It is expected that students will make up essential work missed during illnesses or absences:

- ★ If a student is absent for one or two days then makeup work will be given to the student by the teacher upon his/her return to school
- ★ If a student is absent for at least three consecutive days, parents may call the school to request work, which shall be available for pick up at the school office
- ★ All makeup work must be completed in a reasonable period of time – generally equal to the amount of time the student was out. In other words, if a child is out one week, all make-up work must be complete in one week upon return to school.

Contact Information

At the beginning of the school year every family is either given a username and password (if you are new) or a reminder that you have one (and most likely have updated and personalized it). Every parent should go into the Parent Portal on PowerSchool to verify or change demographic information, phone numbers (home, work and cell), email addresses and emergency contact information.



It is imperative that this information is correct and remains current. Emergency and daily school communication occurs based on this information.

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. *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, Head O'Meadow 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 Head O'Meadow 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.

These drills will occur periodically throughout the year and may or may not be announced beforehand. *An exception is the lock-down drill.* This usually occurs in late October and Head O'Meadow parents will receive detailed information in advance explaining exactly how and when the practice will occur. We fully understand that some of our students have not yet practiced this drill, and we will provide any necessary supports leading up to the drill to ensure that students are able to successfully and confidently participate.

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.



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 in the cafeteria. Smaller items

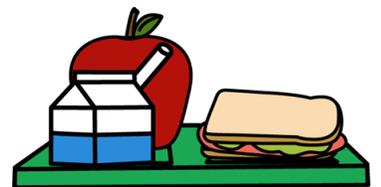
like jewelry and glasses are kept in the main office.

After a while, items in the "lost and found" boxes are removed 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:

Whitson's Dining Service provides a daily lunch program. The program is focused on high quality food, progressive nutrition education programs and excellent service. Key program features:

- Emphasis on wholesome, natural ingredients, whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, lean proteins and healthy snacks.
- A variety of allergen-free foods to accommodate students with allergies.
- Menus comply with the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act and state and local wellness guidelines.



Student Lunch Including Milk \$2.85 per meal

Ala carte items which can be purchased separately are:

Water.....85¢

Low Fat White and Chocolate, Skim Milk.....65¢

Assorted snacks and beverages.....75¢-\$1.00

The menu is published in the Newtown Bee and is also available on the Head O’Meadow website. 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.

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

My School Bucks

My School Bucks is your online payment portal; giving you a quick and easy way to manage and add funds to your child’s meal account. You can review recent purchases along with seeing the current balance, plus receive low balance alerts.

Enrollment is easy. Go to www.myschoolbucks.com and register for a free account. A confirmation email will be sent to the email address you provide; click on the link included in your email to activate the account. Activate your account and begin adding your child(ren). You will need the school name and student ID. You can add money to your student’s account using Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card or debit cards, for a small fee. You can also download the mobile APP for free.

Student accounts may also be funded via check or cash. To make payments at school, 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 12 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.



Newspaper Publicity

Newspaper reporters occasionally visit the school to photograph or to videotape children and teachers involved in various school activities. We also use photos of students and staff on our website and on the Principal's Twitter account. If you prefer that your child not be photographed, or videotaped, please indicate that on the form sent home the first day of school or send in a note to the school office.

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 can request the brochure from 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.

Student Leadership Opportunities

Student leadership develops through many, varied opportunities during and beyond the school day. At Head O'Meadow, one way we help to foster leadership is through our a School Community Team (SCT). Grade Four students learn that by working together, they can make a positive impact in the Newtown community. Meetings are held monthly on Tuesday mornings at 8:15 in the cafetorium.



Visiting the School

In the interests of safety and security, we ask that you observe the following:

- Please contact your child's teacher in advance to arrange a time so you are expected.
- When visiting the building, access is permitted only through the main entrance. A security buzzer system is located to the left of the doors and once admitted, you will need to hand your driver's license to our security guard to have a background check and to receive a visitor's sticker. Take and wear the badge as you go through the building, and return the badge to our security officer as you are leaving (this helps us if someone is looking for you). Please go directly to the area which you are visiting and leave when finished. Visiting other areas of the building is not

permitted.

- Unfortunately, for safety and liability purposes, relatives, children from out of town and/or private schools are not permitted to visit, be left here at school unattended or attend classes.

Throughout the year we continuously evaluate our safety and security procedures; we will notify you in writing regarding any changes taking place.

Volunteering



We love volunteers at Head O'Meadow. There are many opportunities for family members to be involved in our school community as volunteer. Whether it is with the PTA, as a guest reader, or helping in the library or in classrooms, all of our volunteers are very much appreciated.

Volunteers must complete a Volunteer Information Form and Waiver of Liability each school year. The form is 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** be run through our Raptor System and have a completed background check before interacting with students. Please contact the school with any questions you may have.

The following is asked of all our volunteers:

- ❖ Please be on time
- ❖ Please go directly to the area in which you are helping and leave when finished. Visiting other areas of the building are not permitted.
- ❖ It is the expectation that volunteers will work with and assist all children and not just their own child.
- ❖ Confidentiality is very important to us as a school community. It is our expectation that anything observed or heard while at school is not discussed outside of school.

Legal Custody and Rights of Noncustodial Parents

If you are divorced and have legal custody of your child, please send us a copy of the legal decree. It is important for the school to be aware of any specific custody arrangements that would provide guidance to the school system about the rights or lack of rights of one of the parents. This way we can ensure that your child is only released to his/her legal guardian. Without such a decree in our files, we must legally release a child to either parent.

Non-custodial parents usually have the right to see written student records like progress reports and other regular records. We will make them available upon request.

Insofar as parent-teacher conferences and day-to-day communications are concerned, information will be communicated to the custodial parent. In the event of shared custody, we would prefer one conference but are able to accommodate separate conferences if necessary.

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 and focus is always with the child. School needs to be a safe, worry-free place. We will support and work with all family situations, but expect that all adults concerned abide by terms and agreements- as will the school.

We are available to discuss any and all special circumstances and situations.

NEWTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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/StrategicPlan2011-2012.pdf>

School Calendar 2016-2017

<http://www.region15.org/display/dist/calendar>

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>

The staff at Head O'Meadow Elementary School thanks you, the parents, for your continued interest, involvement, trust, and support with your child's education.

Barbara Gasparine, Principal	Carol Danenberg, Lead Teacher	Maddy Allen, Nurse	Toni Baranowski, Executive Secretary	Laurie Marinelli, Secretary
Eileen Tabasko, Language Arts Consultant	Chrissie Pierce, Math/Science Specialist	Lisa Nobes, Reading Teacher	Elisabeth Douglas, Early Intervention	Eric Myhill, Project Challenge
Lisa Dievert, Debbie Keith, & Miryam Kuligowski, Kindergarten Teachers	Anne Annesley, Tara Demers, & Carol Howard, First Grade Teachers	Karen Dreger, Jaime Kurtz, Amy LaRusso, & Sara Washicko, Second Grade Teachers	Bonita Cartoun, Rosemarie Costello & Tina Murphy, Third Grade Teachers	Abbey Clements, Pat Kurz, & Lynn Taylor, Fourth Grade Teachers
Bev Bjorklund & Beth Murphy, Media Specialists	Steve Dreger, Phys. Ed. Teacher	Donna Perugini, Art Teacher	Cynthia Holberg, Music Teacher	Lisa Kilcourse, School Counselor
Marianne Grenier & Monica Crone, Spanish Teachers	Shannon Grumet, Maureen Pennarola, & Marianne Young, Special Educators	Christina Ayoub, Behavior Analyst	Kathy Daigle & Catarina Prata, Building Substitutes Meghan Gaffney, Intern	Kim Parciasepe, Sarah Adams-Shepherd & Betsy Laperriere, Behavior Therapists
Justine Hensey, Speech Pathologist	School Psychologist	Meghan Glynn, Occupational Therapist	Gina Bradbury, Physical Therapist	Nancy Conron, ELL Teacher
Karen Bambino, Monica Bray, Angela Cocchiola, Joy Devorsetz, Janet Graves, Lori Hillman, Cheryl Johnson, LaRae Kirby & Eileen Krupnikoff, Paraeducators	Beth Kurowski, Diane Lawrence, Barbara LoBuglio, Diane Martini, Erika Moran, Karen Pelletreau & Amy Potucek, Paraeducators	Colette Remillard, Karen Schankman & Jen Solomon, Paraeducators	Diane Fisher & Flotura, Cafeteria Staff Mike Kaylor & Kevin Walsh, Security	Wayne Sherwood, Wayne Ciaccia, & Rob Huggler, Custodians

“If parents want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is to teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning. That way, their children don’t have to be slaves of praise. They will have a lifelong way to build and repair their own confidence.”

— Carol S. Dweck