

Guilderland Central School District

# PARENT HANDBOOK

A Parent's Guide to the K-5 Elementary Education

2016-17 school year



# WELCOME

to

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

*Welcome to our school. We look forward to a school year filled with fun and learning. We invite you to get to know us and to join with us to help your child learn. Your participation in and support of the learning process will be a crucial factor in your child's academic and social growth in school. By sharing with each other our expectations, knowledge, and questions, we can make this a successful school year for your child.*

*Our school is a community of caring, respectful students who learn from each other. We believe that learning is a source of joy and wonder and that all children should know the pleasure of using their minds, challenging themselves, and reaching higher standards.*

*This handbook contains information concerning school policies, procedures and programs. It is to help you get to know our school. District Curriculum Guides, available on our website, provide more in depth information. A more complete picture of our school will come into focus as you talk to your children about their school days and join us for classes and special activities.*

*Please feel welcome to contact the school at any time with questions, ideas, or suggestions.*

*Sincerely,*  
GUILDERLAND  
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



# DISTRICT PRIORITIES

## **Healthy, Safe and Engaged**

Our school community will ensure that students have the physical, social and emotional competencies that enable them to be resilient, self-aware and esteemed members of our local and global communities.

- Schools will ensure that all students have meaningful and sustained connections to at least one adult.
- Strong and supportive school cultures will promote a sense of participation, safety and security for all students.
- Schools will embrace partnerships with parents and community to provide meaningful connections to support social and emotional development.
- Teachers will promote intellectual risk-taking, exploration and problem-solving in a variety of learning contexts and applications.
- Schools will ensure that students understand constructive and positive behaviors in ways that motivate them to be physically fit, emotionally healthy and socially aware.
- Leaders will promote and nourish a safe learning and working environment which is supportive, cooperative, ethical, and ensures open communication.

## **Intellectually Challenged and Academically Accomplished**

Our school community will create an exceptional learning environment that engages, challenges, and supports all students so that they thrive and achieve their academic potential, while preparing them to pursue opportunities to be global citizens.

- Students will be prepared to meet or exceed the requirements for a New York State Regents Diploma.
- Students will receive a broad-based education that includes the visual and performing arts, music, physical education, foreign languages and technology.
- Students will be supported early and systematically via coordinated and specialized intervention systems and specialists.
- Students will acquire and utilize basic English literacy, language proficiency and numeracy to achieve goals and communicate effectively in the digital age.

## **Globally Aware and Connected**

Our school community will ensure that students have the knowledge and skills necessary to participate constructively and productively in local and global communities.

- Students and staff will develop competencies to enable all to understand and effectively address matters of conflict, intolerance, diversity and bias in the context of the communities (both global and local) in which they live.
- Students will develop the language, cultural, technological and civic skills necessary to adapt and respond to a rapidly changing 21<sup>st</sup> Century world.
- Schools will provide opportunity for students to engage in service activities that enable them to contribute to or act on local or global social needs and that provide them opportunities to develop social, civic and academic skills through reflection and self-assessment.
- Leaders will foster a professional learning community with the primary focus on student achievement through long-term, intensive staff development and high quality instruction.

# NAMES & NUMBERS

## GUILDERLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

<http://www.guilderlandschools.org>

### **Altamont Elementary**

861-8528

Peter Brabant,  
*Principal*

Mary Katherine Oliver,  
*School Nurse*

Theresa Clemons and  
Sandra Huber,  
*Secretaries*

### **Guilderland Elementary**

869-0293

Allan Lockwood,  
*Principal*

Mary Zwagerman,  
*School Nurse*

Susan Herzog and  
Deb Sim,  
*Secretaries*

### **Lynnwood Elementary**

355-7930

Alicia Rizzo, *Principal*  
Laura Rutkowski,  
*School Nurse*

Meaghan Flynn and  
Bernice Williams,  
*Secretaries*

### **Pine Bush Elementary**

357-2770

Christopher Sanita,  
*Principal*

Tricia O'Keefe,  
*School Nurse*

RoseAnne Bruno and  
Susan Urbanski,  
*Secretaries*

### **Westmere Elementary**

456-3771

Beth Bini, *Principal*  
Marie Eoff,  
*School Nurse*

Marie Wark and Laurie  
Hilton *Secretaries*

### **School Lunch**

456-6200, ext. 3110

Linda Mossop,  
*School Lunch Director*

### **Transportation**

861-6434

Danielle Poirier,  
*Supervisor*

### **District Office**

#### **Administrators**

456-6200

Marie Wiles, Ph.D.,  
*Superintendent  
of Schools*

Neil T. Sanders,  
*Assistant*

*Superintendent for  
Business*

Lin A. Severance, Ph.D.,  
*Assistant*

*Superintendent for  
Human Resources*

Demian Singleton, Ed.D.,  
*Assistant*

*Superintendent for  
Instruction*



# Our School – What you Need to Know

## OPENING AND DISMISSAL TIMES

Elementary Schools	OPENING	DISMISSAL	LATE DISMISSAL
Grades K-5.....	7:50 a.m.....	2:05 p.m. ....	3:00 p.m.

### ATTENDANCE

Since attendance is extremely important during the elementary school years to the academic growth of children and the development of positive attitudes toward school, parents/guardians need to make every effort to have their children attend school on a daily basis. Our Board of Education has adopted a policy on attendance. If a student will be absent more than two (2) days, parents/guardians are encouraged to call the school to request work. Absences due to illness cannot be avoided, but long absences for other reasons should be avoided if at all possible.

It is strongly recommended that families do not take vacations while school is in session as it may affect a student’s overall performance at school. Student/family vacations are not recognized as excused absences. A great deal of learning takes place during the school day. Learning is not only reflected in written work or work that can be sent home, but primarily takes place during hands-on activities, discussions and interactions between teachers and students in the classroom. Teachers are not expected to provide assignments in advance as many times it is difficult to predict the pace at which the class will be learning new information. There is

a strong possibility that extended absences could negatively affect a student’s performance and cause undue stress upon the student when he/she returns. Please notify the school if your child is to be out for any extended period of time.

### EXCUSED ABSENCES

**If your child is going to be absent, please call the Main Office.**

New York state law requires a written excuse or note from home stating the reason for absence, which is due on the first day back to school.

According to NYS law, the following are some examples of legally excused absences: sickness, death in the family, impassable roads, religious observances, and doctor’s appointments.

If we have not heard from you when your child is absent, our school nurse will attempt to call you in order to confirm the absence.

### TARDINESS

Students who arrive after 8:00 a.m. are legally tardy and **must** report to the office since attendance has already been taken in class. Help your child get a good start to each school day—arrive on time.



## HOME INSTRUCTION

Pupils may be considered for home instruction if a parent is anticipating that the child will be absent for more than two (2) consecutive weeks due to illness or medical reasons. This instruction can begin as soon as the parent contacts the principal's office. The application for home instruction may be obtained from the principal's office. The application must be submitted through Lisa Knowles in the Office of Special Programs (861-8591, ext. 1002) with final approval made by the Office of Special Programs. For physical impairments necessitating home instruction, a doctor's prescription explaining the impairment and duration of absence from school must accompany the application.

## BUILDING CABINET

The Building Cabinet is a component of the Guilderland Shared Decision Making Plan. At each building, representative staff members and parents comprise the Building Cabinet. The purpose of the Cabinet is to assist with school operations, coordinate district priorities and policies, and help create a positive learning environment. Meetings are typically held at least once a month.

## LOST & FOUND

The school maintains a lost and found area. Please take a moment when you are in the building to look for your child's missing belongings. It is helpful to label your child's belongings with his/her name, grade and teacher's name.

## VISITORS & SECURITY

Visitors to the school are welcome. All visitors must enter through the main entrance of school buildings, and will be buzzed in through a first set of vestibule doors. Visitors requesting entry into the school through the second set of locked vestibule doors will be required to present a valid driver's license, government-issued ID or passport in order to enter.

## BREAKFAST/LUNCH PROGRAM

Students are offered a nutrition-ally balanced breakfast or lunch daily. The cost is listed in the monthly menu which is posted to the district website, [www.guilderlandschools.org](http://www.guilderlandschools.org).

Applications to apply for reduced or free breakfast or lunch are also available on the district website. Students whose family income falls below a federally designated level are eligible.

GCSD is also pleased to offer SchoolCafé, a way for parents to make online cafeteria meal payments via credit or debit card and view student meal account activity. (*Visit the district website for more information*)

## RELEASE OF STUDENTS

**According to Board of Education policy, children may be released from school to authorized persons ONLY.**

Each year, parents will be asked to designate, in writing, any persons who are so authorized.

When your child needs to leave school during the day for any reason, such as a doctor's appointment, you **MUST** come to the Main Office to sign him/her out. If returning the same day, it is necessary to sign in. It is always helpful to send a note to the teacher with this information, as well.

## INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT TEAM

Each school has an Instructional Support Team which serves as a resource for parents as well as teachers as they try to meet some of the more unique needs and abilities of students in our school. This multidisciplinary team is composed of professionals, such as the language arts coordinator, social worker, school nurse, speech therapist, special education teacher and the principal. At some time, you or your child's teacher may need to consider a referral to the Instructional Support Team. The Team, together with parents and your child's teacher, may develop some educational interventions that will further enhance your child's success in school. This may include support services or a change in instructional strategies.

## PTA

Each school has a PTA—Parent Teacher Association. PTA conducts monthly meetings to coordinate special programs for students and fund-raising activities as well as parent information programs and discussions of educational issues and advocacy. Every family is encouraged to join PTA. Volunteers are always needed.

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS

Every month a combined school and PTA newsletter is posted to each school's website to inform parents of all activities, events, dates and other important school information. If you would like to request a printed copy of the newsletter, please contact the school Main Office.

## TRANSPORTATION

The District provides transportation to and from school on a schedule published and sent to parents before the opening of each school year. Late buses are provided for students staying for sponsored activities. Students will be dropped off at the bus stop closest to their home unless the school is informed that other arrangements are necessary.

A **written note** is required when you request that a child be transported to a location in the district other than the normal drop-off point. (This includes going home rather than to the regular sitter.) Please plan ahead since bus passes are usually completed before lunchtime. **Students may not make any changes** in their daily transportation arrangements without a note from a parent.

Students should not bring anything onto a school bus that is bigger than they can comfortably hold. Parents should arrange to transport very large musical instruments (such as cellos, baritones and tubas), school projects, etc. This is important for the safety of all the children riding the bus.

## SCHOOL CLOSINGS

School closings, delayed openings and early dismissals resulting from weather conditions or other emergencies will be announced on the district website, [www.guilderlandschools.org](http://www.guilderlandschools.org), as well as over several area radio stations and TV stations 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, and 16 (Town of Guilderland). Announcements will also be posted to the district's Facebook and Twitter pages. Closings will usually be announced by 6:30 a.m.



Parents will also receive a phone call via the One Call Now service when schools are closed, opening on a delay or dismissing early due to weather or other emergency conditions. Parents do not need to register for this service.

In addition, parents can receive information regarding school closings and delays through e-mail or on their mobile phone via text message through the Guilderland School News Notifier (SNN). Visit the district website to sign-up for the service. *Please note: Parents are always encouraged to rely on multiple sources of information for school closings, delayed openings, and early dismissals.*

Please note that whenever schools are closed for emergency reasons, school events and continuing education classes will be canceled for that night, as well.

## **PARENT & STUDENT PORTAL**

Parents may access information pertaining to their child via the district's SchoolTool Parent & Student Portal. Information on how to access the portal and create a user account is available on the district website, [www.guilderlandschools.org](http://www.guilderlandschools.org).

## **HEALTH ISSUES**

### *Immunizations –*

New York requires all children to be immunized against polio, rubella, diphtheria, mumps, measles, hepatitis B, and varicella (chicken pox) or have medical documentation should the child have already had the disease. Parental recall is not acceptable. Exemptions from this regulation require

specific medical or religious certification. Proof of immunization for new students must be presented for admission. If you have questions, the school nurse is available to assist you.

### *Emergency Health Cards –*

Emergency health cards are no longer mailed home. Instead, parents are asked to access their child's information on the secure SchoolTool Parent & Student Portal and to visit the district website to verify and/or update the information posted. If any changes in emergency contacts or phone numbers should occur during the school year, please notify the school nurse and Main Office, or log on to [www.guilderlandschools.org](http://www.guilderlandschools.org) to update your child's information using the online emergency contact verification and update form.

### *Physical Examinations and Health Screening –*

All new students and those entering grades kindergarten, two and four are required by state law to have a physical examination. It is recommended that you have this completed by your family physician. If a student has not had a documented physical, the school physician will conduct physicals in the health office.

All students are checked annually for height and weight. In addition, students in grades K-3 and 5 will also receive vision screening and students in grades K, 1, 3, and 5 will receive hearing screening.

At some time during their elementary years, students are screened for color perception and farsightedness. They are also examined for scoliosis after age nine.



### *Body Mass Index (BMI) Screening*

New York requires schools to track each student's Body Mass Index (BMI) and weight status category as part of school health examinations for students in grades 2, 4, 7 and 10. Every year, the New York State Department of Health will survey some schools for the number of pupils in each of six possible weight status categories. If Guilderland Central School District is surveyed by the state, the district will share summary group data only, and will not share individual names or information. Parents who wish to exclude their child's data from such group calculations must contact their child's school nurse in writing.

### *Communicable Disease Control –*

If your child has a temperature of 100 degrees or greater please do not send him/her to school. Your child needs to be fever-free for 24 hours, without taking Tylenol or Ibuprofen, before returning to school.

Do not send your child to school if he/she has been vomiting or has had diarrhea during the night or early morning hours, with or without a fever.

Any rash noted anywhere on the body and/or pinkness of eyes should be seen by your physician prior to your child returning to school.

When your child has been diagnosed with an infection that is contagious to other students and an antibiotic is prescribed, 24 hours of the antibiotic should be taken by your child prior to his/her return to school. If your physician has taken a throat culture of your child, please wait for that result before sending your child to school.

All children who develop symptoms during the school hours of fever, diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat with fever of 100.5 or greater, rash of unknown origin, conjunctivitis, lice, impetigo or scabies will remain separated from other students and their parents/guardians will be called to take the child home, so as not to contribute to the spread of the illness.

**Always notify the school nurse if your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease.** Once alerted to communicable diseases, the nurse works to prevent their spread. From time to time, notices will be sent home with students alerting parents of specific health problems. Please take the time to read these notices and follow any directions that relate to your child.

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

In the event that your child should need medication during the school day, including sunscreen or any other topical over-the-counter lotions, please follow these guidelines:

1. A parent should deliver the medication directly to the school nurse.
2. The nurse must have written instructions from the child's doctor for both prescription and over-the-counter medications which indicate the frequency and dosage to be dispensed.
3. The nurse must also have written permission from the parent to dispense the medication as prescribed by the physician.
4. Prescription medications must be in the original container and should include the student's name, name of the medication, dosage and frequency. Please ask your pharmacist

to dispense the medication in two containers – one for school and one for home.

If you and your child’s doctor concur that your child needs to keep an emergency medication (such as a rescue inhaler or an epinephrine pen)

on his or her person at all times, this is admissible but you and the doctor must complete a special form. The child’s maturity and level of responsibility must be taken into account. You can call the school’s health office to request this form.

## The School Year and the Academic Day

### ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM

The elementary school program is designed to develop students’ confidence in themselves as learners, and to instill a love of learning and a desire to learn. The program helps students develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to communicate effectively, understand the world around them and participate fully in a democratic society.

Students will engage in integrated or thematic study which requires them to read, write, investigate, converse, design, create, analyze, share and present data and opinions as they pursue solutions and understandings.

While teaching and learning in academic subjects are often integrated, the following general time and emphasis guidelines are followed:

Language Arts	2-2 1/2 hrs. daily
Mathematics	1 hr. daily
Science	2 hrs. per week
Social Studies	2 hrs. per week

In addition, health, safety, computer literacy, penmanship, and special projects are integrated throughout the rest of the academic day in both classes and special areas.

The core classroom curriculum typically includes the following:

*Language Arts* involves students in extensive reading and writing activities in a workshop format designed to develop language competence and skill through literature. Students often choose their own reading materials and topics for writing. The emphasis is on encouraging students to love literature and to use reading and writing effectively to express their understanding of what they have learned. Students are also engaged in word study, spelling and phonics to develop language ability.

*Mathematics* places an emphasis on problem-solving skills to develop understanding of math concepts and applications. Students are presented with situations or problems that require mathematical thinking through the Go Math program. Practice in arithmetic is also provided to develop computation skills. Students are encouraged to think and talk about mathematical tasks and to seek multiple solutions to problems.

### *Science and Social Studies*

programs encourage student inquiry and use hands-on activities to foster curiosity and a healthy skepticism. Students read widely, use a variety of resources, and write often to extend their understanding and knowledge of the world around them.

*Technological Literacy* is developed in the elementary school program through the introduction and use of computers and technological tools. These resources are used in the classroom, through mobile laptop labs and iPads, and via the school library program. All third through fifth graders are involved in pursuing on-line research projects, gathering data, interviewing experts and sharing information with peers across the country.

*Health* is designed to provide students with a comprehensive program that meets all state mandates. The kindergarten through fifth grade curriculum represents a total prevention approach to health education and introduces students to a variety of health, nutrition, substance abuse, maturation, and related decision-making issues which are addressed at each grade level. Each year, parents are provided advance written notice of topics to be covered.

Curriculum Guides which outline these content areas and skills taught at each grade level are posted to the district website at the beginning of each year.

## **SPECIAL AREAS**

All kindergarten through fifth grade students receive instruction and participate in these special area classes:

Art	40 minutes once/week
Music	30 minutes 2 times/week
PE	30 minutes 3 times/week

*Art* – The art program is designed to help develop students’ understanding of art through hands-on experience with imaginary and realistic design problems.

*Music* – The music program is designed to foster students’ ability to enjoy and understand music. All students receive general music instruction twice weekly. In addition, fourth and fifth graders have the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument. They may participate in band, orchestra, or chorus.

*PE* – The Physical Education program includes activities in basic and creative movement, rhythm and dance, gymnastics, perceptual-motor skills and lifetime sports. Games are introduced to develop skills for individual and team sports. Students are encouraged to engage in vigorous physical activity daily at home.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is designed to give students an opportunity to practice the skills they have learned in class, to develop the habit of organizing and using time efficiently, to apply knowledge learned in school, and to prepare for further learning.



*Reading* – Children are expected to read or be read to at least 20 minutes a night.

*Mathematics* – Students will receive some homework nearly every day. The minimum time guidelines for math homework are:

First grade.....20-30 minutes/week  
 Second grade .....30-40 minutes/week  
 Third, Fourth,  
 and Fifth grade ...50-60 minutes/week

Students should generally be able to complete their math homework independently.

Parents are urged to support the development of sound homework habits so that students complete their assignments to the best of their ability. Be positive and assist your child when necessary. Always consult your child's teacher if the homework assignments seem too difficult or completing assignments becomes a consistently stressful event.

## **SCHOOL LIBRARY**

Students are encouraged to use the school library to borrow books, pursue a particular interest, conduct research or work on an assignment. Students receive regular instruction on digital citizenship, how to use the library and locate information. The school librarian works closely with classroom teachers to assist in extending the curriculum through access to technology and other library resources. Students have access to other libraries through an online computer system.

Our library program is one that operates with an open, flexible sched-

ule so that students and staff may use it for a variety of purposes, in addition to book selection. The library staff works with students individually or in small groups on projects or areas of personal interest.

## **ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS**

The Guilderland Central School District has partnered with the Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES to provide additional enrichment opportunities to students in grades 4 and 5. The goal for these programs is to support those students who are ready and/or are eager to move beyond the classroom experience and explore new and exciting learning opportunities. Workshops will be scheduled each semester and will include topics focused on Science-Technology-Engineering-Math (STEM), world languages (Project Chinese), non-fiction writing and other topics.

Through such enrichment programs, we hope to support students with unique needs and interests. Notifications of scheduled workshops and registration procedures will be posted on school web pages and will be sent home with fourth and fifth grade students.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are designed as extensions of the curriculum to enhance and expand classroom learning. Throughout the school year, classes may take field trips. Parents will be notified in advance of these trips.

## **RECESS & SNACK TIME**

The district continually reviews and evaluates its guidelines to ensure that students are provided with information and activities that promote a healthy lifestyle. Our staff encourages healthy snacks of vegetables, fruits, or cheese and crackers.

Although there is not a scheduled recess for students, teachers often take the opportunity to offer outside play as a break from learning whenever the weather and schedule permit. We ask for your cooperation by having your child come to school dressed appropriately. Each classroom teacher schedules and supervises recess for his/her own class.

Exercise and proper diet help children be better prepared and focused for the learning that takes place in and out of the classroom.

## **AFTERSCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Students may choose to participate in a number of extracurricular activities, such as intramural sports, band, orchestra and chorus which are typically available for fourth and fifth grade students. Late buses are provided for such activities which take place after school on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Parental permission is required.

## **ASSESSMENT/TESTING**

Teachers continually assess student performance through observation, student conferences and review of each student's written work and assessments.

New York state tests third, fourth and fifth graders in English Language Arts and Mathematics. In addition,

fourth graders are tested in Science. These assessments are intended to help students reach higher standards of learning and to focus on basic skills and their applications. The results of these tests are reported annually on the NYS School Report Card.

## **PARENT CONFERENCES AND REPORT CARDS**

One way teachers and parents work together to help children succeed is by sharing information. Parent conferences are viewed as an effective means of accomplishing this goal. Teachers not only discuss their expectations, but invite parents to share their own insight about their child as a learner. Together, teachers and parents use this time to set goals for the student.

At the end of the first quarter, parent conferences will be scheduled for all students, grades K-5. Report cards will be completed at the close of the second (winter), third (spring) and fourth (end-of-year) quarters. For parents of K-2 students, a second parent-teacher will be scheduled at the close of the third quarter. Optional parent-teacher conferences for students in grades 3-5 may also be scheduled at that time.

In addition, parents are kept informed through personal contact, e-mails, notes, and phone calls. Parents should always feel free to contact their child's teachers for a conference at any point during the school year.

Guilderland Central School District has transitioned to a paperless report card system for all students, grades K-12. Report cards will no



longer be sent or mailed home; instead, parents will be able to access and review their child's report card online via the district's SchoolTool Parent and Student Portal.

Student progress is reported to indicate growth towards New York State Learning Standards. Additionally, teachers will provide comments and suggestions for continued improvement.

### **SOCIAL WORK SERVICES**

In recognition of the complex and sometimes stressful lives of families, the school district offers professional services to children and families with problems that affect school performance. Each elementary school has access to a social worker or school counselor who provides individual and group support for children and families. Services include: conflict resolution, grief counseling, friendship groups and Banana Splits groups. For help or guidance, call the school and ask for the social worker.

### **ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**

The elementary ESL, English as a Second Language, program provides support for the diverse needs of students whose native language is not English. Direct instruction in English grammar and pronunciation, as well as activities to promote listening, speaking, reading, and writing are provided. The ESL teacher consults with teachers to facilitate students' social and cultural transitions and adaptation to the curriculum.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Guilderland School District has a continuum of educational programs for students with disabilities. Based on individual physical, social, academic and/or management needs and abilities, a student with a disability is provided an IEP (Individualized Educational Program) with placement in the least restrictive environment. The district provides a comprehensive educational program and a wide range of services and/or modifications so that these students may be successful learners along with their non-disabled peers.

The Committee on Special Education, which includes parents in its membership, may provide consultation, educational assessments and/or support services for our students with special education needs.

For further information, contact Lisa Knowles in the Office of Special Programs at 861-8591, ext. 1002.



## District Policies and Procedures

***Please note:** A manual of all policies approved by the Board of Education is available online at [www.guilderlandschools.org](http://www.guilderlandschools.org). Included in the manual are such policies relating to student privacy, Title IX student complaints, bullying prevention, instructional goals, computer acceptable use, and much more.*

### WEAPONS/SCHOOL VIOLENCE

The district's policy strictly prohibits weapons of any kind on school grounds or buses. Failure to follow school policy will result in serious disciplinary consequences.

Verbal threats of violence and violent acts will result in serious consequences, as well.

It is district procedure that staff members who become aware of threats or acts of violence share this information with an administrator, who will proceed to take whatever action may be appropriate to guarantee the safety of students. Disciplinary action will be taken as well as a referral to counseling.

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Occasionally, students may be photographed or videotaped in the academic setting by district staff. These photographs/videos are intended for use in district publications and/or within school building websites and district social media sites, and may be released to the media to help inform the public about the district's academic program or to highlight student accomplishments. Parents who object to the release of their child's directory information (name, grade, artwork, awards received, etc.) and/or photograph should notify, in writing, both their child's building principal and the

district's communications office on or before September 15 of the upcoming school year.

### BUILDING USE

The school buildings are widely used by community non-profit groups. When a non-profit organization would like to use a school facility, contact the Main Office for information on availability, building use permits, and insurance requirements.

### TOBACCO USE ON SCHOOL GROUNDS

Due to the health hazards associated with smoking, and in accordance with federal and state law, the Board of Education prohibits smoking or other tobacco use in all school buildings, on school property, or at school-sponsored events.

### PREVENTION OF ALL TYPES OF HARASSMENT & BULLYING

The Board of Education is committed to safeguarding the right of all employees and students within the Guilderland Central School District to a working and learning environment that is free from all forms of harassment. Sexual harassment is a violation of federal and state law and school district policy, and will not be tolerated.



The district has adopted a bullying prevention policy. The district is committed to creating and maintaining a safe school environment for students and staff which supports learning, respect, and freedom from bullying.

Verbal, physical, and social bullying will not be tolerated. Each building has a bullying prevention committee and procedures are in place for reporting, documenting, tracking, and handling bullying.

Students and parents are encouraged to make a verbal or written complaint to the teacher, social worker, or building administrator if they observe bullying or if children are themselves victims of bullying.

## **TECHNOLOGY & ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

School computers may only be used to help perform academic work, to explore educational topics, to conduct research projects, or to contact others for educational purposes. Students will be supervised when they access the Internet. The school staff will take every reasonable precaution to ensure that a student will not access objectionable material. Instruction for students will emphasize that they should not provide personal information or agree to meet with strangers on the Internet. Students should notify the teacher immediately if someone on the Internet requests personal information, asks to meet them, or if they accidentally access objectionable material.

## **ACCESS TO RECORDS**

Under the Freedom of Information Law, parents have the legal right to

view any and all documents in a child's permanent record. If you would like to review this material, please contact the school office for an appointment.

## **VIDEO CAMERAS ON SCHOOL BUSES**

Video cameras may be used to monitor and record behavior on school district vehicles transporting students to and from school or extracurricular activities.

Video recordings will be used primarily for the purpose of evidence for maintaining discipline. However, the district may use such recordings for any other purpose it deems appropriate.

In instances when recordings are considered for retention, the district will comply with all applicable state and federal laws related to personal records.

## **NON-PRINT MATERIALS**

Non-print materials, such as films and videos, may be used to enhance or reinforce student understanding of course content. Films and videos can be a valuable addition to the school program when they make concepts more accessible, widen student perspectives, and illustrate media techniques.

Materials are reviewed by a school team to ensure the appropriateness to the curriculum. Parents will be notified in advance of non-print materials to be used in health units and other potentially sensitive materials, so that students may be excused or obtain alternative assignments if parents have serious objections.



## USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The school understands the value of student's ability to gain information through electronic devices. We see the use of technology as an effective and essential means to support student access to the elementary curriculum. Therefore, students have adequate access to electronic devices during the school day that are provided by the school district. These devices include, but are not limited to, iPads, laptops and desktop computers throughout the school.

We understand that many students have personal electronic devices that include computers, e-book readers, cell phones, hand held games, etc. The use of these devices is discouraged at school and it is recommended that they are not brought to school. This avoids distractions during the school day and prevents inappropriate use of the devices in the school environment. Use of these devices is also discouraged on the bus, unless they are a part of a plan that has been approved by the building principal. Students who have the use of personal electronic devices as part of an Individualized Education Plan will be permitted to use the device in accordance with the plan.

The school recognizes some of our families have situations that require students to transport cell phones to and from school for the purpose of communication. All communication with students during the school day should be done through the main office. If a family elects to send a cell phone to school, it should remain in the student's backpack throughout the school day and on the bus.

The school will not be responsible for any loss or damage to the phone. Families who choose to send in a phone with their child will be doing so at their own risk. Should a student violate the school policy regarding cell phone use, or should the code of conduct be violated, the cell phone may be taken away from the student and will be held in the main office until it is picked up by a parent. Should the principal determine that the use of the cell phone has created a disruption to the educational environment, a student may have the privilege of having the cell phone at school revoked. Parents who elect to send in a cell phone are encouraged to speak with their child about proper use and good digital citizenship.

*Adopted by Building Cabinet: 1/19/17*



## Parental Involvement

*Parents are their child's first teachers. Guilderland Central School District believes that parents should be meaningfully involved in order to make a difference in their child's growth as a learner.*

*Positive parental involvement leads to higher student achievement, regular attendance and improved student attitudes and behavior. Beyond that, it makes sense for parents to engage in conversation with teachers, counselors and others at school in order to provide the best support for their child's learning.*

*Parents can support their child as a learner by encouraging completion of homework, sharing respect for schools and teachers, and demonstrating a value for the work children do in school. This kind of home-school connection sends a strong message to students.*

*Guilderland Schools have adopted a plan enabling parents to become partners with their schools. Parents are encouraged to:*

- *Become involved in school organizations, activities and committees that strengthen the home-school connection.*
- *Meet with teachers and school staff to learn about and share information about their child's learning.*
- *Participate in classroom activities.*

*There are many opportunities for parents to become more involved in Guilderland's community of learners.*

## Notes

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# CODE OF CONDUCT

The 2000 S.A.V.E. (Schools Against Violence in Education) Act requires districts to develop a detailed Code of Conduct which addresses student behavior and maintenance of order on school property, including school functions. In 2010, the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) was passed to build on the S.A.V.E. Act by placing greater focus on the prevention of all forms of discrimination and harassment of students on school property by any student or employee. DASA officially went into effect on July 1, 2012 and has informed our ongoing efforts to create and maintain a safe, nurturing school environment for your child. The Board of Education re-adopts the Code of Conduct on an annual basis. The full text of the current Guilderland Central School District Code of Conduct is posted on the district website at [www.guilderlandschools.org](http://www.guilderlandschools.org).

<b>Guilderland Central School District Summary of the Elementary Code of Conduct</b>		
<p>A code of conduct is a set of rules written to keep our students and schools safe so that all members of our school community can learn and work in a positive environment.</p>		
<p><b>Student Dress Code</b> Students will dress in clothing that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is safe</li> <li>• Does not distract others from learning</li> <li>• Respects the feelings and rights of others</li> </ul>	<p><b>Expected Behavior</b> Students will behave in a positive manner by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coming to school each day ready to learn</li> <li>• Following school and classroom rules</li> <li>• Helping others to learn</li> <li>• Making safe choices</li> </ul>	<p><b>Respect</b> Students will treat others with respect. Guilderland students must never:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bully others</li> <li>• Make fun of others</li> <li>• Hurt others with words that are spoken, written or electronically sent</li> </ul>
<p><b>Student Rights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn in a positive school community</li> <li>• Be treated with respect and dignity</li> <li>• A school environment that is clean and safe</li> </ul>		<p><b>Student Responsibilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Tell an adult if there is a problem</li> <li>• Contribute to a positive school community</li> </ul>

Disciplinary action will be firm, fair and developmentally appropriate. At the elementary level, the building principal, the child's teacher, a school social worker and a Child Study Team may be involved in the development of a progressive disciplinary plan. An emphasis is placed on parent involvement as well as prevention and support.

Parents will be informed when a student's behavior conflicts with the expectations outlined in our Code of Conduct. Penalties may range from a verbal warning or time out to more serious measures such as suspension.