

***Mount Laurel Hartford School
Parent Handbook
2019-2020***



AMAZING THINGS HAPPEN HERE!

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MESSAGE FROM MR. STANARD

Welcome new and returning Hartford families to another new school year! Each year brings new opportunities for your children to learn and grow, both socially and academically. As partners in your child's education, we all play an important role in their development.



For our incoming 5th Grade students, Hartford marks the coming together of our six elementary schools in Mount Laurel. It's the beginning of many new experiences, such as lockers, changing classrooms, and meeting many new friends. Every 5th grader at Hartford is "new" and this common denominator is a great jumping off point for making new connections and, possibly, life-long friendships.

We welcome back our 6th Grade students, and encourage them to set an example of leadership, involvement, and responsible behavior, while they continue to learn and grow during the coming school year.

All parents are encouraged to join our PTO (Parent Teacher Organization). This active group of volunteers has helped fund many of our after school clubs, along with several other programs and "extras" all our students enjoy. I invite you to join and be part of this dedicated group. Children love to see their parents involved!

I look forward to meeting your children, and am honored to be playing such an important role in their lives.

Thank you for taking the time to read the following important information and we encourage you to keep this as a handy reference to answer any question that may arise.

Your partner in education,

Marques Stanard

Principal

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ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is necessary if students are to be successful in school. When your child is absent, we request parents notify the Health Office by 7:45 am (press 2 from the outgoing voice message). This line is available 24 hours a day.

PLEASE NOTE: Whenever a student is absent, an automated call from the District is generated. This occurs even if the parent has contacted the school. If a parent does not contact the school about their child's absence for 3 consecutive days, the police department is notified to do a "well check."

We do not typically gather work for students who are out for 1-2 days. However, if your child is absent **3 or more days** and you would like to request work, please contact the Guidance Office at ext. 5009 by 9:00 a.m. **of the third day absent.**

- Students arriving after 11:00 a.m. are marked absent ½ day
- Students leaving prior to 1:00 p.m. are marked absent ½ day

Excessive absenteeism is addressed as follows:



- If a student is absent 10 or more days, a letter is sent to the parent/guardian alerting them to the situation.
- If a student is absent 15 days, another letter is sent home requiring the parent/guardian to contact an administrator.
- If a student is absent 20 days, the truancy officer is contacted/and a court appearance may be necessary.

Late students (those arriving after 8:00 am) are required to sign in to obtain a late pass before reporting to class. Repeated lateness for non-valid reasons (ex. oversleeping, missing bus) will result in administrative intervention. Exceptions are made for valid reasons such as a medical appointment (with a doctor's note). Lateness totals are accumulated each semester (2 marking periods each).

Consequences for non-valid lateness are:

- After 4 non-valid – Written warning
- After 5 non-valid – Written warning and lunch detention
- 6 + non-valid – Written warning /after school detention
- 9 – Conference with parent / detention
- 10 – "5 Day Notice" and referral to truancy officer, which may result in a court-ordered appearance

Early Dismissal Pick Up procedure requires a signed note from a parent be sent the morning of the pick up stating the child's name, homeroom, date and time of pick up and the name of the adult picking up the student. That person should come prepared to present a photo ID before signing out the child. Parents may also email the office staff with the pick up information stated above. If your child will be picked up on a regular basis, please submit the information in writing to the main office, stating which individuals are permitted to do so.



BELL SCHEDULES

PERIOD	REGULAR DAY	EARLY DISMISSAL	2-HOUR DELAY
Homeroom	8:00am – 8:08am	8:00am – 8:05am	10:00am – 10:06am
1st	8:10am – 8:46am	8:06am-8:29am	10:08am – 10:32am
2nd	8:48am – 9:24am	8:30am – 8:53am	10:34am – 10:58am
3rd	9:26am – 10:02am	8:54am – 9:17am	11:00am – 11:24am
4th	10:04am – 10:40am	9:18am – 9:41am	11:26am – 11:50am
5th	10:42am – 11:18am	9:42am – 10:05am	11:52am – 12:16pm
6th	11:20am – 11:56am	10:06am – 10:29am	12:18pm – 12:42pm
7th	11:58am – 12:34am	10:30am – 10:53am	12:44pm – 1:08pm
8th	12:36am – 1:12am	10:54am – 11:17am	1:10pm – 1:34pm
9th	1:14am – 1:50pm	11:18am – 11:41am	1:36pm – 2:00pm
10th	1:52pm – 2:28pm	11:42am – 12:04pm	2:02pm – 2:26pm
Homeroom	2:30pm – 2:35pm	12:05pm – 12:10pm	2:28pm – 2:35pm
Gray highlighted areas denote lunch periods.			

BUSES / TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Department (856) 778-6905 ext. 1500

Students are expected to travel to and from school on their assigned bus. If you choose to drive your child to school, please do so after 7:45 AM as supervision is not available until that time. (See *Morning Drop-Off on Page 9.*) Transportation is provided as a privilege to all students who follow proper bus behavior. **Students are not permitted to ride a different bus to another student's home.**



The district's only responsibility is to transport students to and from their own homes. In the event of an emergency, you may make a request for a bus change **in writing** to the principal. A note is also required from the adult to whose home your child is being transported. These notes should be submitted the morning of the request for approval. Approval of the request is contingent on available space on the requested bus. The note should include the date and reason for the request, along with parent signature. **Play dates or working on a project are not valid reasons for switching buses.**

CELL PHONES & ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students are not permitted to carry cell phones during the day. Cell phones are to be kept in lockers during school hours, or they may be confiscated at the discretion of administration. Cell phones are not permitted on field trips.

Cell phones and Music

The use of a cell phone as a music device is restricted to the bus only, unless a specific teacher has given permission for educational purposes. **Upon entering the building, all students must remove headphones and lock them up.**

Loss/Theft/Damage

Any student who possesses a cell phone, or any other valuable item shall assume responsibility. **The school is not responsible for theft, loss, or damage.**

CLUBS / ACTIVITIES

Hartford School offers a variety of after school activities for our students. A complete Club/Activity List for the current school year is posted on the Hartford Website as soon as they are finalized (usually early September). Sign up information is posted in the PowerSchool Daily Bulletin and is announced during homeroom. Club permission forms are available in the cafeteria and on our website (Flyers/Forms tab) as the club is forming. The Daily Bulletin may be viewed through your Parent Portal. Clubs with limited enrollment are chosen randomly. Please be sure your child has no conflicts with meeting dates, so as to not take away the opportunity from someone else. We strongly suggest that students sign up for only one club per season. Students who miss club meetings may be dropped from the club roster at the discretion of the club advisor. Also, students with discipline issues may be excluded from participating in a club. Late buses are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays and depart Hartford School at

approximately 4 pm and drop off in general locations in each neighborhood, which may not be your child's usual stop. If you choose to pick up your student from a club, please plan to arrive at the school by 3:50 pm. Each club is assigned to specific exit doors for dismissal and parents will be notified by the club advisor as to which door to pick up their child. Parents will wait outside of the designated door for their child to be dismissed.



Be sure to read "Health/Nurse Services" on page 8 for important information regarding mandatory intramural sports health physical forms. Permission forms are required for all our after-school activities.

DISMISSAL – Bus & Parent Pick-Up

We encourage all students to take the bus to and from school. Hartford dismisses students beginning at 2:35 p.m. Bus dismissal is called in two waves determined by the Transportation Office. Please allow a reasonable amount of time for your child to arrive at home.

If you need to pick up your child early or at dismissal, please **send a note with your child's full name, the time of pick up, and specifically who will be picking up your child.** If, for some reason, you are unable to send a note ahead of time, please call the school so we are aware of your arrival.

In all cases, whoever picks up a student will be required to **show identification.** If we are unaware of a student being picked up by someone other than a parent/guardian, the parent/guardian will be contacted prior to releasing the student.

- **Parent Pick-Up at the end of the school day will begin at 2:30 p.m.**
Students not picked up on time may be put on their assigned bus unless we are notified ahead of time that the parent will be late.
- Parents/guardians picking up their student at dismissal will line up outside the Main Entrance doors until staff members arrive to begin signing out students.
- As each student is signed out, our staff will walkie talkie for the student to come to the main entrance door and be released to the parent/guardian.
- Due to the timely nature of our dismissal procedures, and because students are still in the building for Extended Day Care and clubs, visitors will not be permitted into the building until after dismissal is completed and you are able to speak with Main Office personnel.

DRESS CODE

Students are expected to look neat and well groomed at all times. The Principal/Assistant Principals shall determine whether a student is dressed according to our guidelines. The Principal may waive guidelines for some events.

Dress Code Guidelines

- All attire shall be neat, clean and modest in appearance.
- Apparel shall not be tight fitting, overly loose, sheer, brief, low cut, revealing around the waist or restrict normal movement.
- Tank tops, half shirts, halter or tube tops are not permitted. Undergarments or pajama like clothing is not permissible.
- Knee length/finger tip length shorts may be worn. Short shorts, cutoff shorts or miniskirts may not.
- Outdoor jackets and head coverings, including bandanas, are not to be worn, except for religious reasons or on special approved theme days.
- Backpacks and purses should be stored in lockers. Students are not permitted to carry backpacks and purses during the day unless given permission by administration.
- Heavy chains around the neck, wrists or belt are not permitted.
- Beach/shower/slipper-like footwear is not to be worn.
- Suggestively obscene or offensive graphics/wording on any garment is prohibited.
- Non-prescription sunglasses/tinted glasses are not to be worn.
- Laced shoes must be properly tied.



Students are expected to follow these guidelines for all school functions

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS & DELAYED OPENINGS

The decision to close school or have a two-hour delayed opening is made at the District level. The School Messenger System is set-up to call over 4,000 families within 14 minutes. It pulls information from our PowerSchool Student Information System. Parents/Guardians update their demographic information prior to the beginning of each school year. If your phone number(s) or email changes mid-school year, you can make these changes via your SwiftK12 account through the Parent Portal. Or, send changes in writing to the Main Office. Please see the District website for complete information ("Parents" tab – Weather Emergencies).

In the event of a **two-hour delay, homeroom will begin a 10:00 am.** (See *Bell Schedule on Page 4.*) Bus pick up will be two hours later than the regular time. Lunch will be served. If snow begins to fall during the school day, we will not close early. However, after school activities may be canceled. Please note: This is a district-wide decision and would be relayed via our District text messaging system.

EXTENDED DAY CARE

EDC Office - (856) 231-5890

Extended day care is provided **after school** at Hartford and is handled through the EDC Office. Please notify the EDC Office with any changes in daycare arrangements for your child. Before school care is available at Larchmont School and students are bused to Hartford in time for school. Please contact **the EDC Office for more information.** EDC is dismissed in the back of our building

outside of the cafeteria area. Parents should **enter the rear parking lot, using the entrance off of Hainesport-Mount Laurel Road.** Please park and come to the first door located between the music suite and the cafeteria. This door will be clearly marked “Extended Day Dare Pick-Up.” EDC staff will be present to sign your student out and will be called via walkie-talkie to the pick-up area

FIELD TRIPS

Parents/guardians are required to sign a permission slip for their child to attend each field trip. Any field trip fee must be paid by check only. Students are expected to follow school rules and normal dress code on trips. Cell phones are not permitted on field trips. Also, students are not permitted to purchase souvenirs. Chaperones must be 21 years of age or older and must be legally related to the child. If a field trip chaperone wishes to bring their child to school with them on trip day after 8:00, the student is considered late and must obtain a late pass before reporting to homeroom. This is not an excused lateness. Administration reserves the right to exclude a student from attending a Field Trip due to discipline or behavior issues.

FORGOTTEN BELONGINGS

Please encourage your child to gather their school supplies each evening to assist them with their organizational skills, becoming more responsible, and avoiding forgotten items. However, if your child does forget an item and you feel it is essential and absolutely necessary for them to have it, you may bring the item to school and leave it on the designated table in the vestibule. Main Office personnel will assist you. Students will be allowed to come pick them up in the office during the day. Please label all items with your child’s **full name**. Students who forget items in their school locker may return after hours to retrieve them.

HEALTH / NURSE SERVICES

If a child is not feeling well, they are referred to the Health Office. The nurse will assess if a parent needs to be called. Students are not to call a parent. Any child thought to have an infectious disease will be referred to the nurse. First aid treatment is administered for injuries occurring at school.



Illness – Children should not be sent to school with symptoms of illness. If your child has a fever, diarrhea, vomiting or infection such as strep throat or pink eye he/she should not return to school until 24 hours after symptoms have subsided. If your child is started on antibiotics, please keep them home the first 24 hours. Please notify the health office if your child is positive for strep, pink eye or any contagious infection as it helps prevent the spread of illness.

Medication – Mt. Laurel BOE policy encourages parents to administer medication at home; however, it is recognized that children with special needs, chronic illnesses, and specific disabilities may require medication during the school day.

All medication (prescription/over-the-counter - including cough drops) **must be brought to school by a parent/guardian**, be in the original container, labeled with the student's name and dosage and require written authorization from the physician and parent/guardian. The Board of Education permits self-administration of medication for asthma or life-threatening illnesses or serious allergic reaction, but District paperwork and documentation must be completed. Please check with the nurse or school website for information and forms.

Immunizations – NJ State has mandated all students entering 6th grade are **required** to receive one booster dose of the Tetanus, diphtheria/pertussis (Tdap) vaccine and one dose of Meningococcal vaccine before starting school. The documentation must be provided to the school nurse before the first day of school. **Students who have not been vaccinated may be excluded from school until an appointment can be verified.**

Emergencies – In case of medical emergency the school will call the Mt. Laurel EMS to transport to the hospital. Every effort is made to contact the parent/guardian first. Please be sure your emergency contacts are up-to-date in PowerSchool.

Health Screenings (height, weight, blood pressure) are mandated by the state. Scoliosis screenings are performed each year on 6th grade students. A student may be exempt from this exam on the request of a parent. Screening for visual acuity is conducted annually in grade 6.

Physical exams are required for all new students entering a Mount Laurel school for the first time.



Important information regarding intramural sports The State of NJ has mandated that all students in grades 5-8 participating in intramural school sports must have a medical exam by a physician within 365 days prior to starting the sport. This physical exam must be completed on the Department of Education's Approved Athletic Physical Examination Form. This 10-page form can be obtained through school or on the district or school websites.

These forms are valid one calendar year from the exam date not from the date the paperwork was returned. It is suggested you keep a copy. If your child's exam was more than 90 days prior to start of the sport, a separate Health History Update Questionnaire must also be completed.

I&RS (INTERVENTION & REFERRAL SERVICES)

I&RS offers teacher support for students with varying needs, providing services at Hartford and the district level. The role of the committee is to determine which service(s) will most benefit the student. A plan to implement the support is developed by the committee. Each school has its' own I&RS Committee.

Administrators, teachers, school counselors and other staff collaborate monthly to assist teachers to meet the needs of all students.

How Can You Help Support Your Child In School?

- Stay in contact with your child's teacher.
- Get to know your child's school counselor.
- Check and sign your child's homework planner daily.
- Check the school's website for homework assignments and/or class announcements.
- Join our PTO or volunteer to help with school events.



LOCKERS

Each student is issued a combination hall locker and a PE locker with a school provided lock. Students should secure their locker after each use and not share their combination with anyone. Personal items may be mounted in a locker with magnets (no adhesives). Hall lockers measure 10" deep x 11.5" wide.

LOST & FOUND

Our *Lost & Found* is located between the double doors to the cafeteria. Our PE department also has a *Lost & Found* in the locker rooms. Please label your child's coat, lunch box, glasses, backpacks, etc., with their full name so their lost item can be returned. Items such as glasses, jewelry, and cell phones are kept in the Main Office for a reasonable period of time. At the end of each marking period, unclaimed *Lost & Found* items are donated to area shelters. Please encourage your child to search for lost items **as soon as possible**. Students should not bring valuable items to school. **The school is not responsible for theft, loss, or damage.**

LUNCH

Lunch is served every full day of school. Students may buy or bring a lunch from home. Mt. Laurel uses the online LunchTime payment system so parents can deposit funds into their child's account. Please go to the district website and click on the "Parents" tab and proceed to "Cafeteria Service – LunchTime Portal. Questions? Call our cafeteria at ext. 5015.

If your child forgets their lunch or lunch money from home, they may charge a lunch. However, **payment is expected the following day.**

MORNING DROP-OFF

We strongly suggest that all students ride a district-provided bus to and from school. Utilizing district-provided transportation to school ensures that the students are here on time and alleviates traffic problems. Our parking lot cannot accommodate a line of cars as this interferes with the arrival of buses and staff members. If a parent chooses to drive their child to school, we ask that they follow the procedures outlined below for the safety of all of our students and staff.

- Students may **not** be dropped off prior to 7:45 a.m. Hartford teachers are assigned the duty of safely crossing students at the crosswalk in our parking lot **beginning at 7:45 a.m. Please follow their directions and give them your utmost courtesy and respect. They are there to protect all of our students and staff.**
- Please use the entrance closest to Hainesport-Mt. Laurel Road. **Do not enter on Jefferson Street, as this goes against traffic.** Use the lane closest to Hartford Road designated for student drop-off. The lane closest to the building is for buses only.
- We realize that buses and cars arriving at the same time may cause traffic issues. Therefore, parents driving their student to school may *arrive* before 7:45 a.m., but must pull into a parking space in the area closest to Hartford Road. Students should wait in the car under parental supervision until staff members are at their posts to safely cross them at the crosswalk in the parking lot.
- Recognizing that some parents need to be at work prior to our start time, the district does provide morning daycare for Hartford students **at Larchmont School beginning** at 7:00 a.m. Hartford students are then bused to our school in plenty of time for the start of school. If you would like information about this program, please refer to the district website.

Please note – If you choose to drive your child to school rather than use our district busing, they are still required to be in homeroom by 8:00 am. “Traffic in parking lot” is not a valid excuse for lateness.

PARTIES

Food brought into school must be in store bought packaging, and must include a list of ingredients to avoid food allergy concerns. **Homemade items or food without labels will not be distributed.** Some suggestions are store made bakery items, soft pretzels, vegetables, or fruit. Please avoid common allergens such as nuts.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

The school district will not assume responsibility for loss, theft or damage of personal property. Therefore, students should not bring in large sums of money, valuable jewelry, electronic devices, etc.

POLICIES

District wide policies are available on the district website.

POWERSCHOOL FOR PARENTS

All parents should have created a Single Sign-On for PowerSchool to view their child’s grades, attendance, and report cards. This is done through the PowerSchool Parent Portal and can be accessed from the Mount Laurel District website – www.mtlaurelschools.org. Scroll to the bottom of the GRADES &

ATTENDANCE page to verify the school record for absences and late arrivals. Parents can also view the Daily Bulletin for important school announcements. ***Please keep in mind that we do not have control over the PowerSchool app, and not all functions are possible from the app on your phone, such as viewing report cards.***

PTO (PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION)

Hartford and Harrington Middle School share a joint PTO (HHSPTO) and they welcome all parents to get involved. Our PTO funds many of our after school clubs and other activities that benefit all students. Meeting dates and times are posted on the school website and calendar. Please sign up for their weekly email reminders and support their efforts whenever possible.



RECESS

Beginning with the 2019-20 school year, both 5th and 6th graders at Hartford School will participate in a scheduled recess period. Students will be escorted outside for recess and will be supervised by our Hartford teaching staff. In the case of inclement weather conditions, students will remain in their classroom and will be allowed to participate in games, puzzles, or other unstructured, appropriate activities. Students will not be permitted to have cell phones or other electronic devices during recess. Please refer to the *“Cell Phones & Electronic Devices”* section of this handbook.

RECOGNITION/AWARDS

Students at Hartford School are recognized in a variety of ways throughout the year. All students have the opportunity to earn **P.R.I.D.E.** tickets from a teacher for good character, which puts them in the drawing for a prize drawn monthly for each team. In June, our People’s Choice evening event presents an award to teacher-nominated students who particularly stood out during the school year. And at the end of the year, students who excelled academically, in PE, and in the arts, and those who made an extra effort to show compassion toward others, are recognized at an awards assembly. Students achieving straight A’s for the entire year are recognized at our end of the year Awards Assembly. “Perfect attendance” is not rewarded.

REPORT CARDS

Report Cards are now “paperless” and are available for viewing and downloading from PowerSchool. They are issued quarterly and parents are notified by the district when they become available. Any questions/concerns regarding a grade should be directed to the subject area teacher. **Progress reports** are issued to students in danger of receiving a “D” or lower in any subject or who drop 2 or more grades in any class. “Honor Roll” certificates are not issued. Students who achieve straight A’s are recognized at the end of the year.

SECURITY / FIRE DRILLS

Emergency procedures are in place at all district schools to ensure our students' safety. Fire and lockdown drills are practiced every month, as required. Teachers review the rules and procedures with students.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Students in grades 3-11 take the computer-based NJSLA state assessment for Math and Language Arts in the spring. Parents will be notified in advance regarding specific test dates. This online test includes tools built into the computer platform that include accessibility features for each student based on need. These features, which are typically used in class, are intended to show what they know and are able to do. 5th Grade students also take a standardized Science test.

TELEPHONE USE DURING THE DAY

Your child's teacher will determine the necessity of calling home for forgotten books or assignments. Students should use the phones located in the classrooms (with the teacher's permission), as cell phones are to remain in lockers. Please remind your child to always leave you a message, if you cannot be reached.

VACATIONS

Vacations during the school year are discouraged, and absences are considered "unexcused." Please be sure to notify the school of any absence, including vacation. You will still receive the automated absence call, even though you advised the school of your child's absence. Please keep in mind that your child's teachers are not required to gather work prior to your vacation. Your child will be expected to make up work when they return.

VISITORS

We ask that **all visitors contact the school prior to visiting**. If you need to speak with one of our administrators, **please email them, or call the Main Office, and we will be happy to schedule an appointment as soon as possible**.

For the safety and security of students and staff, all visitors to the building must come to the front main doors, ring the doorbell, and be screened by Main Office personnel. Each visitor must be individually admitted into the building. **Please do not hold the door open for another visitor behind you.**

