

Mount Laurel Hartford School
2020-2021
Parent Handbook



***AHEAD OF THE REST,
TRULY THE BEST!***
*Celebrating 25 years!!
1995-2020*

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A 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 and this year, in particular, will be bringing many unprecedented challenges. 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. 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 HHSPTO, which is a combined PTO for both Hartford and Harrington. This great group of volunteers has helped fund many of the "extras" our students enjoy, and I invite and encourage you to join and be an active part of this dedicated organization. Children love to see their parents involved!

I look forward to seeing your child, whether in person or remote, and am honored to be playing such an important role in their lives.

Because of the current situation we find ourselves in this year, our Parent Handbook is an abbreviated version of past handbooks. However, I thank you for taking the time to read the following important information and encourage you to keep this as a handy reference to answer questions that may arise. More information is always available on our Hartford School website.

Your partner in education,
Mr. Marques Stanard
 Principal

5th Grade Assistant Principal – Ms. Mary Anne Vastardis
 6th Grade Assistant Principal – Mr. Shawn Blackshear
 Principal's Secretary – Ms. Maryann DiMartino
 Main Office Secretary – Ms. Liz Robostello
 Main Office Assistant – Ms. Kim Ziegler
 5th Grade Guidance Counselor – Ms. Mary Beth Perella
 6th Grade Guidance Counselor – Mr. Marc Cianfrani
 Guidance Office Secretary – Ms. Carol Torres
 School Nurses – Ms. Lisa Doulong – Ms. Stenton (Part-time)
 Health Office Assistant – Ms. Janet LeBreton

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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."

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 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).

BUSES / TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Department (856) 778-6905 ext. 21500

Students are expected to travel to and from school on their assigned bus. Transportation is provided as a privilege to all students who follow proper bus behavior, **and all safety precautions must be followed. 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.



CELL PHONES & ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phones are to be silenced and kept in backpacks during school hours, or they may be confiscated at the discretion of administration.

- ***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.

DISMISSAL – Bus & Parent Pick-Up

We encourage all students to take the bus to and from school. This year, bus dismissal is 12:10pm. 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, teacher's 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 or email the school by 10:00am so we are aware of your arrival. **Please avoid last minute changes.**
- If you plan on picking up your child **on a regular basis**, please send a note to the Main Office with the **specific days** you will picking up, and the **specific names** of who is allowed to pick-up your child.
- 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 12:00pm.** 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.



- **This year, parents/guardians picking up their student at dismissal will park in the lower parking lot on the 5th grade side of the building, and will line up outside the side entrance door until staff members arrive to begin signing out students. A complete diagram of our Parent Pick-Up procedure is on our school website under the “Parents” tab – “Flyers/Forms” drop-down.**
- As each student is signed out, our staff will walkie-talkie for the student to come to the side entrance door and be released to the parent/guardian.
- Due to the current circumstances, visitors will not be permitted into the building.

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

- **Since the gym locker room will not be used this year, students should come to school dressed prepared for PE class, which means comfortable clothes and sneakers.**
- All attire should still 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.
- Heavy chains around the neck, wrists or belt are not permitted.
- 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 CONTACT INFORMATION

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.

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

Due to current circumstances, Field Trips are cancelled for this year.

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. With the exception of medications or eyeglasses, please avoid bringing forgotten items to the school building. Please label all items with your child's **full name**.

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. The Health Office will contact parents/guardians if your child needs to go home, and parents/guardians/emergency contacts are expected to pick up the student within 30 minutes.



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 and must be fever-free for 24 hours (without medication). 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, & vision) 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.

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

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.
- Join our PTO or volunteer to help with school events.

LOCKERS

At this time, hallway and gym lockers will not be used this year.



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 personal belongings 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

Since in-person lunches are not an option this year, the District is offering breakfast and lunch for PICK-UP for those students who are learning remotely 100% of the time, and lunch to be taken home for HYBRID students on days in school and picked up by a parent/guardian for days not in school. Please go to the Mt. Laurel Schools Website and follow the schedule and specific links for more information, payment options, and Meal Requests.

NOTE: ALL orders MUST be placed by 10 PM on SUNDAY NIGHT for meals for the following week.

MORNING STUDENT 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. *A complete diagram of our morning drop-off procedure is on our school website under the "Parents" tab – "Flyers/Forms" drop-down.*

- Please do not arrive at the school 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.
- 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.

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. Students’ full names should be on all personal property, including lunch bags, coats, jackets, 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. ***For best results, use a computer to access this information. A cell phone or the PowerSchool app will not allow you access to the information or any documents. Also, make sure you are using Chrome as your browser.***

To see the most accurate information for your child’s student attendance, scroll to the bottom of the *GRADES & ATTENDANCE* page to verify absences and late arrivals.

Parents can also view the Daily Bulletin for important school announcements.

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. Most flyers for events are emailed directly to parents through our SwiftK12 system eliminating the use of paper.



RECESS

Both 5th and 6th graders at Hartford School participate in a scheduled recess period. Students will be escorted outside for recess and will be supervised by our Hartford 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.

REPORT CARDS

Report Cards are “paperless” and are available for viewing and downloading from PowerSchool (via a computer – please refer to “PowerSchool for Parents section). 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.

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. Security announcements and strobe lights are in use during drills. If you see or hear these notifications, please stay away from the building entrance. There will be no entry to the building during any drill.

TELEPHONE USE DURING THE DAY

Your child’s teacher will determine the necessity of calling home for various reasons. Students may use the phones located in the classrooms (with the teacher’s permission), as cell phones are to remain in backpacks on silent mode. 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

Due to current circumstances, we must limit visitors to our building. 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.**

