

Schaghticoke Middle School Student/Caregiver Handbook 2026-2027



23 Hipp Road
New Milford, Connecticut 06776
Telephone: (860) 354-2204
www.newmilfordps.org/schaghticoke-middle/



SCHAGHTICOKE MIDDLE SCHOOL

23 Hipp Road
New Milford, CT 06776
Phone (860) 354-2204
Fax (860) 210-2217

August 2026

Dear Students & Families,

Welcome to the 2026/27 school year at Schaghticoke Middle School! I hope that you had a relaxing and restful summer break, and that you are as excited as I am about the start of the new school year. I would like to extend a special welcome to all students and families that are new to the Schaghticoke community this year, including students and families joining SMS from Sarah Noble, as well as those that are new to New Milford Public Schools in general.

Our primary goal at Schaghticoke is to prepare each and every student for success in high school, by ensuring that each student grows academically, socially, and emotionally. Achieving this goal requires high expectations for our students and staff, many of which are outlined in the Student/Caregiver Handbook. This handbook contains important information about Board of Education policies, school based practices and procedures, and more. It is divided into four sections: Student Life, Academics, Policies, and Discipline. Each section is organized in alphabetical order, by topic. Please take the time to review the handbook thoroughly to ensure that you understand the expectations at Schaghticoke and are set up for success.

In addition to growth and development academically, socially, and emotionally, it is the vision of those at Schaghticoke that all members of the SMS community will be valued, safe, and supported. In order to achieve this vision, it is essential that we all work in partnership with one another toward these collective and individual goals. It is my sincere hope that you will play an active role in our school community and your child's education. As part of these efforts, I encourage you to join the SMS PTO. Additionally, if at any time you have questions or need help for your child, please do not hesitate to reach out to a member of the team at SMS.

Looking forward to a rewarding and fun school year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jennifer Powers'.

Jennifer Powers
Principal

Strive ~ Unite ~ Respect ~ Grow ~ Encourage

Schaghticoke Middle School Vision Statement

Schaghticoke Middle School is made up of a community of learners: students, parents, faculty, staff, administration, and citizens of the greater New Milford area. The foundation of our vision lies upon the positive reinforcement of character: integrity, responsibility, respect, and fairness. Together we will work to create an environment in which all students can reach their potential academically, socially, and emotionally under the guidance and nurturing support of the Schaghticoke community members. We will collaborate to foster an atmosphere of trust and support in order to encourage teachers and students to explore new initiatives in curriculum and assessment to improve student achievement.

PREFACE

The material covered within this student handbook is intended as a method of communicating to students and parents/guardians regarding general district information, rules and procedures and is not intended to either enlarge or diminish any Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Material contained herein may therefore be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Any information contained in this handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination from time-to-time without notice. Consult the district's website or the individual school's website for any significant changes. The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy that affect portions of this Handbook will be made available to students and parents through newsletters, web pages, and other communications.

NEW MILFORD DISTRICT DIRECTORY

Board of Education

Mrs. Leslie Sarich, Chairperson
Mr. Eric Hansel, Vice Chairperson
Mrs. Sarah Herring, Secretary
Ms. Tammy McInerney, Assistant Secretary
Mr. Dean Barile

Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach
Mr. Brian McCauley
Mr. Tom O'Brien
Mr. Joseph Failla

Central Office Administration

Dr. Janet Parlato, Ph.D., Superintendent
Ms. Holly Hollander, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Matthew Cunningham, Director of Facilities
Mr. Anthony Giovannone, Director of Fiscal Services and Operations
Ms. Linda Demeyer, Director of Human Resources
Dr. Kimberly Culklin, Director of Student Services
Mrs. Sandra Sullivan, Director of Food & Nutrition Services
Mr. Jeffrey Turner, Director of Technology

NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the New Milford Public Schools, a collaborative partnership of students, educators, family, and community, is to:

- prepare each and every student** to compete and excel in an ever-changing world;
- embrace challenges** with vigor;
- respect and appreciate** the worth of every human being; and
- contribute to society** by providing effective instruction and dynamic curriculum, offering a wide range of valuable experiences, and inspiring students to pursue their dreams and aspirations.

SCHAGHTICKE MIDDLE SCHOOL VISION STATEMENT

Schaghticoke Middle School is made up of a community of learners: students, parents, faculty, staff, administration, and citizens of the greater New Milford area. The foundation of our vision lies upon the positive reinforcement of character: integrity, responsibility, respect, and fairness. Together we will work to create an environment in which all students can reach their potential academically, socially, and emotionally under the guidance and nurturing support of the Schaghticoke community members. We will collaborate to foster an atmosphere of trust and support in order to encourage teachers and students to explore new initiatives in curriculum and assessment to improve student achievement.

SCHAGHTICKE MIDDLE SCHOOL CLIMATE VISION STATEMENT

Schaghticoke Middle School is a place where all members of the community are valued, safe, and supported.

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SECTION 1: STUDENT LIFE

ACADEMIC HELP

Success in academics is very important and we are committed to helping each student achieve his/her best. Academic help is available in all subjects, after school, from 2:20 p.m. – 2:40 p.m. Students & families should arrange, with the teacher, an appointment in advance that is mutually convenient. The purpose of academic help is to provide individual or small group attention for those students who are experiencing academic difficulty. Additionally, a student in need of extra support may be requested to attend the Academic Fitness Club that meets after school from 2:20 p.m. until 3:30 p.m.

ACCIDENTS

Any accident involving possible injury to a student or damage to school property must be reported immediately to the teacher in charge of the area and to the administration. In order for an accident to be documented for possible insurance claims, certain forms must be completed and returned to the office within twenty-four (24) hours of the accident. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and complete such forms.

ADMITTANCE INTO BUILDING

For the safety of all members of the SMS community, all exterior doors are kept locked during the school day. Our school also has camera surveillance. If you need to enter the building during school hours (from 7:35 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.), please come to the front door and ring the doorbell. You will be asked to state your name and the reason for your visit to SMS. A member of our secretarial staff will then buzz you in. Please report directly to the Main Office once inside. If it is your first time visiting SMS, you will be asked to show your ID and it will be scanned using our security system. All visitors to SMS will be given a badge which must be worn at all times while on campus.

AEROSOLS & PERFUMES

For the health and safety of others, the use of aerosols and perfumes is not permitted at SMS. Students are to leave these items at home.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Regular and punctual student attendance is essential to the educational process. Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-184 provides that “each parent or other person having control of a child five years of age and over and under eighteen years of age shall cause such child to attend a public day school regularly during the hours and terms the public school in the district wherein such child resides is in session, unless such child is a high school graduate or the parent or person having control of such child is able to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools. For the school years commencing July 1, 2011, to July 2022, inclusive, the parent or person having control of a child seventeen years of age may consent, as provided in this section, to such child’s withdrawal from school. For the school year commencing July 1, 2023, and each school year thereafter, a student who is eighteen years of age or older may withdraw from school. Such parent, person or student shall personally appear at the school district office and sign a withdrawal form. Such withdrawal form shall include an attestation from a guidance counselor, school counselor or school administrator of the school that such school district has provided such parent, person or student with information on the educational options available in the school system and community. The parent or person having control of a child seventeen years of age may withdraw such child from school and enroll such child in an adult education program pursuant to [Connecticut General Statutes Section] 10-69. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the school district office and sign an adult education withdrawal and enrollment

form. Such adult education withdrawal and enrollment form shall include an attestation (1) from a school counselor or school administrator of the school that such school district has provided such parent or person with information on the educational options available in the school system and in the community, and (2) from such parent or person that such child will be enrolled in an adult education program upon such child's withdrawal from school. The parent or person having control of a child five years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is six years of age and the parent or person having control of a child six years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is seven years of age. The parent or person shall exercise such an option by personally appearing at the school district office and signing an option form. The school district shall provide the parent or person with information on the educational opportunities available in the school system."

In order to assist parents and other persons in meeting this responsibility, the New Milford Board of Education (the "Board") monitors unexcused student absences and makes reasonable efforts to notify parents or other persons by contacting them when a student fails to report to school. State law provides that any person who, in good faith, gives or fails to give such notice shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give such notice. The Board, therefore, must obtain a telephone number or other means of contacting parents or other persons during the school day.

Students are expected to be in school for the full daily schedule, which runs from **7:35 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.** Further commitments, such as after-school activities, special help, or disciplinary detention, may require that a student stay later.

Absences

Connecticut State Board of Education

Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences

Adopted June 27, 2012

The following definitions are for the use by Connecticut school districts and schools for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of section 10-198a of the Connecticut General Statutes (Policies and procedures concerning truants), and for the purpose of reporting truancy, pursuant to subsection (c) of Section 10-220 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The use of these definitions for state purposes does not preclude districts from using separate definitions of excused and unexcused absences for their internal uses (including decisions on promotion/retention, grading and disciplinary action).

Excused Absences

By state statute, a student is allowed 9 excused absences each year. A student's absence from school shall be considered excused if written documentation of the reason for the absence has been submitted within ten school days of the student's return to school or in accordance with Section 10-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes and meets the following criteria:

A. For **absences one through nine**, a student's absences from school are considered excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and informs the school;

The following situations do not count toward a student's 9 excused absences:

- Field Trips
- Testing
- Travel for school activity or athletics

- Suspension from school
- Each student is also allowed 2 mental health days. These days cannot be taken consecutively and are not part of the 9 excused absences.

B. For the **tenth absence and all absences thereafter**, a student's absences from school are only considered excused for the following reasons:

1. Student illness (Note: all student illness absences must be verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of absence); Excessive excused absences may result in school personnel communicating with the student's medical providers.
2. Student's observance of a religious holiday;
3. Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;
4. Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required);
5. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation is required for this reason); or
6. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance.

Unexcused Absences

All absences from school will be considered unexcused unless they meet one of the following criteria:

1. the absence meets the criteria of excused as stated above
2. the absence is due to discipline issued by the school
3. all absences not reported by a parent /guardian call and a note are considered unexcused.
4. all absences after the 9th absence are considered unexcused unless they meet the criteria outlined in section B above

Excessive Absences

1. Students absent five (5) or more consecutive days due to illness or any communicable disease must have a doctor's statement (could be by phone) of good health to the school nurse prior to re-admission to school.
2. If a student continues to be a chronic absentee*, the principal (or designee) may contact the Department of Children and Families (DCF)
3. Given reasonable cause to believe a student is truant from school, the school administration may ask the school social worker to visit the student's home to verify the cause of the absence. Such home visits may be scheduled outside of regular school hours.
4. The administration reserves the right not to excuse students who are chronically absent and to require written verification of reason.

* (Connecticut State Statute Sec. 10-198a – Truant: Any child between the ages of seven and sixteen who has had four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences in any school year. Sec. 10-Habitual Truant: Any child having twenty (20) unexcused absences within a school year).

Attendance – Participation in Activities & Events

Students must be present in school to attend afterschool or evening events. Students who are absent on the day of the event, or who are serving in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion may not attend after school or evening events. This includes participation in and attendance at athletic events and concerts.

Students who are not in the building for **at least half of the day (4 hours on a full day/ 2 hours on a half day)** will be marked absent for the day per the CT State Department of Education *see Appendix G*

Early Dismissal

Students should remain in school for the entire day (7:35 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.). The only exception will be appointments and other matters that cannot be taken care of after the close of school.

1. In general, early dismissals should be avoided, particularly if they require a student to miss any instructional time; however, should an early dismissal be required, the reasons must be consistent with the school's absence policy. Verification of the early dismissal may be required. At the time of the dismissal, parents must sign students out in the main office.
2. All requests for early dismissal must be in writing or by phone, provided by the parent/guardian submitted to the main office on the day for which early dismissal is requested.
3. Students who have an excused early dismissal are eligible to make up work and are eligible thereafter to receive full credit. Each student is responsible for getting missed assignments and submitting them on the next class day.
4. Students who abuse the regulations concerning early dismissal may be denied permission to leave school early for the remainder of the term.
5. Students who are not in the building for at least 4 hours (2 hours on a half day) will be marked absent for the day.

Tardiness

1. The school day begins at 7:35 a.m. If a student arrives after this they **MUST** report to the main office before going to class.
2. If a student is at a doctor's appointment, a note should be brought from the doctor in order to excuse a tardy. Tardiness to all classes will be dealt with by the teacher in charge. Chronic problems in **tardiness to class will be referred to the school administration with consequences.**
3. If a tardy arrival causes the student to miss more than 4 hours (2 hours on a half day) they will be marked absent for the day.
4. The same rules apply to athletes for them to participate in athletic events that day.

Family Vacations

Vacations disrupt the learning process. It is for that reason we ask that, except in highly unusual circumstances, parents schedule family vacations during the summertime or during school recesses, such as those in December and April. Please be mindful for those who might be planning a vacation in June, snow days are added to the calendar in June. If your family is planning a vacation, please notify the Main Office at SMS as you would for any other absence.

Please note the following regarding vacations:

1. Family vacation days are only excused if a student has under 9 absences, in accordance with state law.
2. If a student exceeds 9 absences while on vacation, the remainder of the absences will be marked unexcused. Similarly, if the school has not been notified, the absences will be marked unexcused.

3. Please note that it is the responsibility of the student to monitor the Google Classroom for each class and to make up work while they are away, or to coordinate with each teacher upon their return. Please note, teachers will not be responsible for providing assignments in advance.
4. Upon return from vacation, students will be allowed to make up work missed in accordance with the attendance and make up/missing work sections of this handbook, provided that the absences associated with the vacation are excused.

ASSEMBLIES

Throughout the year, assemblies may be presented to various classes. During assemblies, students are expected to give courteous attention to the program, thus allowing other students their right to enjoy the presentation. Inappropriate behavior may lead to disciplinary consequences and the suspension of assembly privileges throughout the year.

ATHLETICS

Schaghticoke Middle School offers a variety of interscholastic and intramural athletic opportunities. Intramural sports are recreational sports at SMS, while the interscholastic level involves tryouts, a greater level of commitment, and competition against other middle schools in the region.

Seasonal Athletic Offerings

Fall	Winter	Spring
Cross Country (IS)	Basketball (IM, IS)	Baseball (IM, IS)
Field Hockey (IM, IS)	Volleyball (IM)	Flag Football (IM)
Flag Football (IM)		Frisbee (IM)
Soccer (IM, IS)		Softball (IM, IS)
Volleyball (IS)		Track & Field (IM, IS)
Unified Sports	Unified Sports	Unified Sports

Key: IM = Intramural, IS=interscholastic

***Selections listed represent those that ran in the 2025/26 school year. Selections are subject to change.*

Interested in participating in one of our intramural or interscholastic athletic opportunities? Be sure to listen carefully to morning announcements for more information on season start dates. Parents, watch your email inboxes for updates from SMS which will include appropriate information about our athletic programs. If you have questions or concerns about any of our athletic programs, please reach out to our athletics coordinator, Mr. Hibbard at hibbardr@newmilfordps.org.

Eligibility to Participate in Athletics

Participation in athletics, at either the intramural or interscholastic levels, at SMS is a privilege. It is expected that all student athletes at SMS will meet the requirements for academics, citizenship, and sportsmanship outlined in the section of this handbook dedicated to eligibility. Additionally, it is expected that all student athletes will demonstrate good sportsmanship while participating in school athletics.

Students that consistently demonstrate poor sportsmanship will not be eligible to participate in athletics at Schaghticoke Middle School.

Spectator Code of Conduct

- Respect decisions made by contest and school officials;
- Refrain from taunting, booing, heckling, and the use of inappropriate language;
- Attendance at a contest is not a license to verbally assault others or to be generally offensive;
- No noisemakers;
- Respect athletes, coaches, officials, and fans;
- Obey all local and school regulations;
- Be a fan, not a fanatic.

Violations of these rules may result in removal from the event and exclusion from any further athletic events. Violations of these rules may also result in school disciplinary consequences.

BACKPACKS

Backpacks, side bags, book bags, string bags and mini-bags are to be used as a means for transporting school related items. These bags should be of a size that will fit in a student's hall locker and or completely under a student's desk/chair in the classroom. All students are issued lockers on the first day of school and are encouraged to utilize their lockers to prevent carrying too much with them throughout the day. In the event that a student's bag does not fit under their desk/chair in the classroom, for safety reasons, they will be asked to put it in their locker.

BEHAVIOR

Your parents/guardians, our community, and the school district have worked together to provide you with a staff, building, and equipment to help prepare you for a future of success. We are committed to giving you the best education we can and know you will take special pride in keeping our school "First Class."

Through the year you will be expected to assume the responsibilities listed below:

1. Attend class;
2. Be in your assigned seat with all necessary materials when the bell rings;
3. Give every assignment your best effort;
4. Treat every student and staff member with kindness;
5. Follow the specific rules in each class;
6. Help maintain the building and all school equipment and materials and keep these things in good condition;
7. Refrain from using inappropriate behavior and language on school grounds and on the school bus;
8. Refrain from activities that might prove injurious to you or others;
9. Comply with Board of Education expectations regarding student conduct, which are set forth in the 5000 Series of the [Board Policies](#), available on the New Milford Public Schools' website.

In the school setting, the classroom teacher is the primary disciplinarian. If the usual interventions between a teacher and a student fail to resolve a concern, the parent can expect to be contacted by the classroom teacher. The following are a series of procedures that may be taken to resolve a classroom situation.

- Conference with teacher;
- Call to parents/guardians from teacher;
- Request for guidance intervention;

- Assign/reassign detention;
- Referral to administration.

BOOKS & OTHER MATERIALS

Each student is responsible for maintaining and returning in good working order all books and materials issued to him/her. All public property issued to or used by students is to be treated with care. Loss, damage or wear and tear beyond normal use due to misuse, neglect, or carelessness will result in a replacement charge. This applies to books, athletic equipment, laboratory equipment, locks, computers, etc. Damage to or loss of books or other materials is the student's financial responsibility. Certain student privileges may be withheld from students who fail to satisfy outstanding obligations. Withdrawal from school/transfer cannot be processed until all textbooks are returned.

BUILDING HOURS

The building opens to students beginning at 7:15 a.m. each school day. Students who arrive at school between 7:15 a.m. and 7:25 a.m. should report to the cafeteria.

BULLETIN BOARDS

The various bulletin boards and hallways located throughout the school are intended only for approved school-related information. All flyers, posters, etc must be approved by administration before they can be posted.

BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING, CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR, AND TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

A positive school climate is the foundation for learning. As such, conduct that impedes the establishment and/or maintenance of a positive school climate is strictly prohibited. Examples of such conduct include, but are not limited to bullying, cyberbullying, teen dating violence, and challenging behavior.

"Bullying" means unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten through twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

"Cyberbullying" means any act of bullying through the use of the internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any other electronic communication.

"Teen dating violence" means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

"Challenging behavior" means behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering with the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee.

Students who engage these behaviors on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such behavior has a negative impact on the school environment, may be subject to disciplinary action. Such disciplinary action may include suspension and/or expulsion from school.

Community members, including students and families, can report behavior that does not contribute to a positive school climate using Anonymous Alerts or via the Challenging Behavior Reporting Form. Any and all reports will be promptly reviewed and, if verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process.

Board policy #5131.91 and regulation #5131.91R outline the Connecticut School Climate Policy and corresponding administrative regulation.

BUS PASSES

If a bus pass is needed, please call SMS Main Office at (860)354-2204.

CAFETERIA

New Milford's Food and Nutrition Services Department works hard to ensure that students are provided with the opportunity to have nutritious and delicious meals while at school. Both breakfast and lunch are served each day. Breakfast is served from 7:25 a.m. to 7:35 a.m. each day. Please note, students wishing to have breakfast at school are still expected to be on time for class. Student lunch times are based on their individual class schedule. For lunch, students may choose the full hot lunch, salad bar, or a variety of individual items available. Lunch menus are available on the [Food & Nutrition Services website](#).

While in the cafeteria, students are expected to maintain the same standards of conduct as they would while dining with family or out at a restaurant. These expectations include:

1. Students are only allowed in the cafe during their scheduled lunch block. Otherwise, they should be in their assigned classroom.
2. Students should select a seat and wait to be called to the lunch line.
3. Only students that are purchasing food should enter the food service area. Students are not allowed to eat cafeteria food until they have completed their purchase and are past the cash registers. Panhandling is strictly prohibited.
4. Students must remain seated in the cafeteria while eating.
5. At the conclusion of each lunch period, students are responsible for depositing their trash in the receptacles provided.
6. Any departure from appropriate behavior in the cafeteria infringes upon the rights of others and will not be tolerated.
7. Students who abuse the cafeteria privilege may be given disciplinary consequences.
8. No food or drink may be taken out of the cafeteria
9. Weather dependent, after approximately 17 minutes into their lunch period, students will be offered an opportunity to go outside. (Students whose lunch behavior is inappropriate, may be asked to remain inside).

New Milford's Food and Nutrition Services Department provides parents with a convenient, easy, and secure online prepayment service to deposit money into their children's school meal accounts at any time. This service also provides you with the ability to view the account balances through a web site called www.myschoolbucks.com. In addition, you can print out a copy of your children's eating history reports. The history report lists dates and times of all food purchased within the past thirty days. Parents may also place restrictions on accounts to limit the purchase of a la carte items.

When parents choose not to take advantage of the online pre-payment service, advance payments via cash or check are made to the cafeteria. Checks are payable to the School Lunch Activity Fund and should include your child's full name and PIN. Students may put money in their account anytime

except when lunch is being served.

If your child qualifies for free or reduced priced meals, this information is noted in the system and the meal is processed just as it is for all other students without any special indication to the student. Applications for free or reduced priced meals will be sent home with students in the fall and are also available in the school office. If you are concerned about your child's food allergy, please notify the cafeteria with this information. If indicated, a warning will appear on the cashier's screen for a review of the items on your child's tray.

When purchasing a meal, students enter their person's six-digit personal identification number (PIN). Students should not share their PIN number with anyone. A practice keypad can be found on the district homepage. Please feel free to contact the Food Services office at 860-354-3712 if you have any questions.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

A student whose home address changes within the Town of New Milford, or whose phone number has changed, should notify the main office immediately. For changes of home address, proof of residency will be required.

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

If there is a question about a student's classes or work in school, it is best to first contact the person who is closest to the situation. In most cases this is the teacher. The proper channeling of complaints regarding instruction, discipline or learning materials is:

- (1) teacher
- (2) team leader/case manager
- (3) school counselor
- (4) assistant principal/supervisor of special education
- (5) principal
- (6) superintendent
- (7) board of education

For more information on specific channels of communication, please see the "Who to Contact if You Need Help" section below.

COMPUTER RESOURCES

The District utilizes computer technology to broaden instruction and to prepare students for a computerized, digital society. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement regarding appropriate use of these resources. Violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Students and parents should be aware that e-mail communications, using district computers, are not private and may be monitored by staff. Students may not access social media sites using District equipment, while on District property, or at a District sponsored activity unless the posting is approved by a teacher. The District will not be liable for information posted by students on social media websites, such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, etc., when the student is not engaged in District activities and not using District equipment.

The District reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store at any time and without prior notice any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access and any and all information

transmitted or received in connection with such usage. All such information files shall be and remain the property of the School District and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such material.

Federal law requires the district to place filtering devices on school computers to block entry to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, harmful or inappropriate for students as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

District-Provided Personal Learning Devices

All students will be provided with a Chromebook or similar personal learning device. It is the student's responsibility to keep these in good working order. If a problem arises the student should put in a [help desk ticket](#). Parents are financially responsible for damages, loss or theft of the device. Students leaving the District must return their devices, with accessories, on the day of departure. Students are required to read and sign a usage policy outlining the guidelines and restrictions to be followed for appropriate use of the computers.

Privately-Owned Technological Devices

Privately owned technological devices may not be used during instructional time, except as specifically permitted by instructional staff. On school property, at a school-sponsored activity, while in use for a remote learning activity if remote learning has been authorized in accordance with applicable law, or while being used to access or utilize Board technology resources, the use of any such device for an improper purpose is prohibited. Improper purposes include, but are not limited to:

- Sending any form of a harassing, threatening, or intimidating message, at any time, to any person (such communications may also be a crime);
- Gaining or seeking to gain unauthorized access to Board technology resources;
- Damaging Board technology resources;
- Accessing or attempting to access any material that is obscene, obscene as to minors, or contains pornography;
- Cyberbullying;
- Using such device to violate any school rule, including the unauthorized recording (photographic, video, or audio) of another individual without the permission of the individual or a school staff member; or
- Taking any action prohibited by any Federal or State law.

Search of Privately Owned Technological Devices:

A student's privately owned technological device may be searched if the device is on Board property or in a student's possession at a school-sponsored activity and if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. Any such search shall be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.

Responsibility for Privately Owned Technological Devices

Students are responsible for the safety and use of their privately owned technological devices. If a privately owned technological device is stolen, lost, or damaged while the device is on school property or during a school-sponsored activity, a report should be made to the building principal, who will investigate the loss in a manner consistent with procedures for stolen or damaged personal property. Students and parents should be aware that the Board is not liable for any privately owned technological device that is stolen, lost, or damaged while at school or during a school-sponsored activity. For that reason, students are advised not to share or loan their privately owned technological devices with other students.

CELL PHONES & SMART WATCHES – STUDENT USE

Students are not permitted to use personal cell phones and/or smart watches during the school day. All students are encouraged to leave their cell phones and/or smart watches at home. Students that bring their cell phone and/or smart watch, and other wearable technologies to school must turn it off and put it in their locker for the duration of the school day.

- If a student is found to be in possession of a cell phone and/or smart watch during the school day, the student will be sent to the Main Office to turn in their phone. For the first three offenses, the student will be permitted to pick the device up in the Main Office at dismissal. Beginning with the fourth offense, and for each offense thereafter, a parent/guardian will be required to pick the device up from the Main Office between 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Additional disciplinary consequences may be assigned.
- Any student found to have taken pictures, videos, audio recordings of others while on school grounds and/or while riding school transportation, or to have used their device to engage in mean spirited behavior/bullying will have the privilege of bringing a device to school/storing it their locker during the school day revoked for a period of time, the length of which will be determined by administration.

DANCES

Social events in the form of dances and concerts are sponsored by various school groups and clubs throughout the year. The following applies to school sponsored events:

1. Dances are for currently enrolled Schaghticoke School students only. No guests are allowed.
2. Students must be present in school on the day of the dance to attend.
3. Students serving a suspension (ISS or OSS) on the day of the dance are not permitted to attend.
4. Students are not to be on school grounds more than 15 minutes before and following the dance. No one is to loiter on school grounds at any time.
5. Book bags and other packages or containers are not allowed at the dance, and if brought, must be turned over to the chaperones at the door.
6. Directives of staff members and chaperones are to be politely complied with.
7. All school rules are in effect, and anyone violating school or dance rules is subject to other disciplinary action, such as detention, suspension, etc.

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

Maintaining discipline within the school is an essential component of ensuring a safe environment in which students can pursue their education and access the school's many extracurricular activities. Students and their parents are expected to learn and abide by the district's disciplinary policies and the school's behavioral expectations. A discussion of these policies and expectations are set forth in sections 3 & 4 of this handbook.

DUE PROCESS & OTHER CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

The right to "due process" simply means that, especially in disciplinary matters, the student is entitled both to know what misconduct he/she is accused of having engaged in and to tell his/her side of the story to the school administrator in charge. This right is primarily intended for serious disciplinary situations where suspension from school is a possibility,

Equally significant is the fact that students in public schools do not automatically possess all the constitutional rights of adults or of a citizen on the street. School officials have the duty to create and maintain an atmosphere in which learning can take place.

ELIGIBILITY

Academic Eligibility: Athletics, Events, & Other Activities

At SMS we believe that clubs, activities, athletics, and events represent important opportunities to extend learning outside of the classroom and/or school setting, build community, and provide students with well rounded educational opportunities. These experiences are designed to supplement the learning that takes place in the classroom setting, which is the foundation of the educational experience in middle school. Clubs, activities, athletics, and events will be available to all students at SMS that are in good academic standing.

Please note, for the purposes of this document, clubs, activities, athletics, and events will be encompassed by the term "activities."

What is the criteria to be considered in good academic standing?

- Students entering the middle school from the intermediate school or other educational opportunities are automatically eligible to participate regardless of their previous academic record.
- A student must be passing a total of six classes, three of which must be core classes, to be eligible to participate in activities.
- Initial eligibility for participation is based on the grades for the marking period immediately preceding the start of the activity for the second, third and fourth marking periods. Initial eligibility for activities in the first marking period is determined based on the final grades for the previous academic year.
- Continued/revised eligibility is determined by grades for the next marking period.
- Eligibility will be determined based on the grades described above as of the date that report cards are made available to families.
- Failures cannot be made up for eligibility purposes in any manner until the close of the next marking period.
- Incomplete grades do not count toward eligibility and will not be considered as passing or failing grades. Incompletes must be made up within 10 school days or they will automatically be considered failing grades.

What specific clubs, activities, athletics, and events are covered by these requirements?

These requirements cover all clubs, activities, athletics, and events that are not designed to provide extra academic support and assistance to students as they strive to find success in their classes at SMS. Examples of things that these requirements do not cover are: Homework Club, Math Lab, and Academic Fitness.

What classes are considered core classes?

ELA (both Reading & Writing in Grade 6), Math, Science, Social Studies, Communication Arts, Spanish, French, Reading Comprehension, ESL, Multi-Sensory Reading (MSR), and Cultural Connections.

Important Notes for 8th Grade Students:

It is important to note that students in the 8th grade must be academically eligible to participate in end of year celebrations such as but not limited to: the ice cream social, the send off, the dinner dance, and the promotion ceremony.

Citizenship Eligibility: Field Trips, Athletics, Events, & Other Activities

At SMS we believe that field trips, events, and other activities represent important opportunities to extend learning outside of the classroom and/or school setting, build community, and provide students with well rounded educational opportunities. By nature, the environment in which these opportunities take place are often less structured, or provide different structures, than the traditional school setting. Field trips, events, and other activities will be available to all students at SMS who consistently demonstrate that they will represent Schaghticoke Middle School and the New Milford communities well in these alternative settings. Students demonstrate the ability to represent our school and town by meeting the expectations established by the Board of Education, district, and school.

At SMS a three strike system is used to determine student eligibility to participate in field trips, events, and other activities. If a student accumulates three or more strikes, that student will not be eligible to participate in any and all field trips, events, or other activities. Strikes are assigned as follows:

- **Out-of-School Suspension:** 3 automatic strikes for every incident resulting in out-of-school suspension.
- **In-School Suspension:** 1 automatic strike for every incident resulting in in-school suspension.
- **Bus Suspension:** 1 automatic strike for every incident resulting in suspension from the school bus.
- **Detention (office assigned):** 1 strike for every three office assigned detentions (after school or lunch).

Any combination of strikes from detentions, in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, and/or bus suspensions that total three or more strikes will result in loss of eligibility for field trips, events, and other activities.

Redemption of Strikes

Students will have the opportunity to have a strike removed from their record if they can display positive behavior for 15 consecutive school days. Positive behavior is defined as the absence of any referrals and/or behaviors that would warrant a strike be accumulated.

Review Board

Any student having three or more strikes resulting in the loss of privileges for field trips, events, and other activities may choose to meet with a school-based review board. The board shall consist of teachers, school staff, administration, and/or community members. The student may have the opportunity to bring a parent/guardian and have their case be heard for the purpose of having their exclusion from field trips, events, and other activities be reversed. The decision of the review board is final and may not be appealed.

Refunds

Any student that signs up for a field trip, event, or other activity is committing to maintaining eligibility to participate. As such, any student signing up is expected to meet the financial obligations associated with the opportunity even if they lose eligibility to participate.

Access to the Curriculum

Students that are not eligible to participate in field trips, events, and other activities that are related to the curriculum shall be provided with a similar opportunity that aligns with the same standards via an alternative assignment to be completed in school on the day of the field trip.

EVENING EVENTS

Students must have been present in school and be accompanied by an adult when attending any evening event at Schaghticoke Middle School, including plays and concerts. Students not with a parent will be asked to wait in the office until a parent arrives to pick him/her up or to accompany the student to the event.

FIRE DRILLS & EVACUATIONS

All students, faculty, and staff are expected to vacate the building at the sound of the fire alarm. Directions for proper exit are posted in each room. Valuables should not be left behind when the classroom is vacated. In addition to monthly fire drills, drills for emergency response codes will also be conducted. Consult your classroom teacher for a more detailed explanation of these codes. In the event of an emergency situation in the school environment, all students, faculty, and staff are expected to follow instructions given by the administration, police department and/or fire department.

FOOD & DRINK

The New Milford School District's Wellness Policy strives to promote good nutrition as one of the key components to help students achieve and maintain good health. For more information, please visit www.newmilfordps.org and click on Food Service for our district's wellness initiative.

Deliveries

Students are not permitted to order food and/or drink to be delivered to the school.

In Classrooms, Hallways, Etc.

Students may not have food or beverages, except water, in classrooms or corridors. All food and beverages are to be consumed in the cafeteria.

HEALTH OFFICE

The school health office is designed to provide care to students who become ill or are injured while in school. A cumulative health file is maintained for each student. This file includes notations of past illnesses, results of physical examinations, and other pertinent health information. Vision and hearing tests are administered to students in grades K, 1, 3, 4 and 5. Postural screening will be done in grades 5 and 7 for female students and grade 9 for male students. The results are provided to the parents. An annual written notification of when these screenings, at no cost to parents, will be provided. Parents wishing to have these screenings conducted by their private physician are required to report the screening results to the school nurse.

Medication

Connecticut law requires a physician's written order and parent/guardian's written authorization for a nurse to administer medicinal preparations in school. If at all possible, medications should be given at home and not during school hours. If a student requires the administration of medication during school hours, please review the appropriate Board of Education policy on the New Milford Public Schools website.

Physical Examinations

All students must present evidence of a physical examination upon enrollment to the district. (C.G.S. 10-204a) Health assessment shall also be required in grade 6 (or 7) and in grade 9 (or 10). All students in grades K and grades 1, 3, 4, 5 will undergo vision screening by the school nurse or school health aide. Hearing screening will be conducted for all students in grades K, 1, 3, 4, and 5. Postural screening will be conducted for all female students in grades 5 and 7 and for male students in grade 9. If a homeless

student, as defined by federal statute, lacks immunization/medical records, the school will enroll the child and refer the parent/guardian to the district's homeless liaison.

INSURANCE

Accident insurance is available for purchase by each student. Parents/guardians are encouraged to enroll their child in this program if they do not have medical or accident insurance, since most accidents during the school day are not covered by Board of Education school insurance.

LASER POINTERS

In accordance with state law, possession of laser pointers by minors on school grounds or other public places is prohibited unless being used under the direction of a teacher. Shining, pointing, or focusing a laser pointer directly or indirectly at or on anyone for the purpose of harassing, annoying, or causing a person to fear injury is prohibited. Infractions are punishable by fines set by a judge of the Superior Court. A school consequence may be issued as well.

LAVATORY USE (VIOLATIONS OF)

Lavatory facilities are provided at SMS for intended bathroom uses only. Students are expected to limit their time in a lavatory facility to the time needed for intended use only. All school rules and Board of Education policies are applicable in the lavatory.

Additionally, students may not:

1. Loiter in a lavatory;
2. Act as a "lookout" who warns other students of the arrival of a staff member into the lavatory;
3. Have more than one person in a stall at a time;

The Administration reserves the right to restrict lavatory use privileges of students who abuse their lavatory privileges.

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

The library media center is open from 7:35 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. for student use. A student must have a pass to go to the library media center.

LOCKERS & LOCKS

A locker, in good operating condition, will be issued to each student on the first day of school. Lockers are made available for students to be able to store backpacks, coats, cell phones, smart watches, etc during the school day. The lockers are school property and are on loan to the student. The administration will open locked lockers if it has reason to believe the locker may contain items which are illegal and/or a threat to the safety and wellbeing of the school community, or are otherwise being used for purposes that would constitute a violation of the law or of Board policies. The contents of the locker are the responsibility of the person to whom the locker is issued. Locker clean outs are held periodically throughout the school year.

Students must use a school issued lock on their locker. If a lock that was not issued by the school is found on a locker, the lock will be cut off the locker and discarded. The charge for a lost lock is \$8.00. Locks should be kept locked at all times. Students are not to share lockers or give out their combinations to other people. Additionally, students should not access or attempt to access a locker other than the one assigned to them. If a locker is malfunctioning, students should report the concern to their homeroom teacher.

LOST & FOUND/PERSONAL PROPERTY

Students are advised not to bring expensive watches, jewelry, electronics, and other personal items to school. Any items brought to school are a student's personal responsibility. The school does not take responsibility if personal property is lost or stolen. When students do not have them in their personal possession, the items should be locked in their regular or gym locker. A lost and found area will be located in the cafeteria for all lost items, except books which will be sent to the issuing teachers. The school is not responsible for any property lost, including money, at school. Allegations of theft will be handled by the administration.

PASSES

Students are required to have a pass any time they are in the corridor after 7:35 a.m., except when passing between classes. Students must report to their normally scheduled class before using a pass to any other place in the building. Students who abuse pass privileges may be placed on a restricted pass by administration.

PERSONAL PRIVACY

Any type of recording device (audio and/or visual) is strictly prohibited in school, especially in bathrooms and physical education locker rooms. Title IX protects any person from sex-based discrimination, regardless of their real or perceived sex, gender identity, and/or gender expression. Female, male, and gender non-conforming students, faculty, and staff are protected from any sex-based discrimination, harassment or violence.

RECORD KEEPING PROCEDURES

Student academic progress will be updated and recorded at regular intervals in the Parent Portal. No formal notice of these updates will be provided. Report cards will no longer be mailed home. State Assessment scores will be reported to students and parents/guardians through the mail or delivered to students with parent notification in the fall following the test date.

RESIDENCE

Children who reside outside of the school district but whose parent or parents live in New Milford may not attend New Milford Schools, except with special permission of the Board of Education; however, a student may reside with an adult resident of New Milford if this is a permanent arrangement and has the consent of the parent. Questions of residence are certified through the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Schools (860-354-3235).

SCHOOL COUNSELING & OTHER RELATED SERVICES

Each student at SMS has a School Counselor assigned to them, typically based on their grade level/team. Parents/guardians may schedule a conference with their child's school counselor between 7:25am and 2:40pm. School counseling services are structured to assist students in understanding themselves and to help them make the best use of the school's educational resources. Counselors are not licensed to offer therapeutic counseling. The school counselors are available to students through referrals made by the student, parent, teacher, or administration.

In addition to our School Counselors, SMS is serviced by school psychologists and social workers. These staff members are responsible for psychoeducational evaluations, consulting with staff and parents concerning a student's academic and emotional needs, providing school based counseling for students, and facilitating the implementation of the student's educational program. They will also help parents procure the necessary outside resources they may need.

The fax number for the School Counseling Department is (860)354-7901.

SILENT READING/TAKE TIME TO READ

New Milford Public Schools (NMPS) is committed to developing a culture of competent readers. Reading, like other skills, needs to be practiced regularly. Based on evidence which suggests that volume of reading is linked to attaining higher-order literacy proficiencies (Allington, 2012; Brozo et al, 2008, Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992), Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) researched the relationship between the amount of reading done and reading achievement. They found that the amount of time reading was the best predictor of reading achievement, including a child's growth as a reader from the second to the fifth grade. (Calkins, Research Base Underlying the Teachers College Reading and Writing Workshop Approach to Literacy Instruction).

Being committed to promoting a culture of readers, NMPS subscribes to the following parameters:

Grade	Reading Time
K	1 Picture Book Read Aloud or Read Independently
1	10-15 minutes
2	20 minutes nightly
3	20 minutes nightly
4	30 minutes nightly
5	30 minutes nightly
6-12	45 minutes or more nightly

As a regular part of the school schedule, time will be set aside for students and staff to practice reading. It is expected that all students will be prepared for this time with something to read. Students that need help accessing a book at their just right reading level or finding a new book of interest are encouraged to talk to a teacher or visit the LMC.

SNOW DAYS

Inclement weather will occasionally result in the closing of school or early dismissal or, in less severe situations, a delayed opening. Information about school delays and closings will be announced via Parent Square and the NMPS website.

SKATEBOARDS

Possession and/or use of a skateboard is not allowed on campus at Schaghticoke Middle School, at any time. Violations may result in disciplinary consequences.

STAYING AFTER SCHOOL

Students are permitted to stay after school for athletics, academic help, clubs and other activities. Students must be with a teacher, coach, or other adult at all times while staying after school. Students

must have written permission from a parent/guardian to stay after school. This written permission should be given directly to the teacher/coach/other adult that the child will be staying with. Please note, there is no general supervision after school. As such, all students are expected to leave at dismissal unless they have made previous arrangements with an adult to stay after school.

STUDENT RECORDS/CONFIDENTIALITY

The parents or legal guardians of a minor student are entitled to knowledge of and access to all educational, medical, or similar school records maintained in their child's cumulative folder, within a reasonable time after request. Parents and guardians are not entitled to information about their children which is considered privileged, in other words, confidential communication between teacher or nurse and student.

With a few exceptions, release of student information or transfer of records may take place only with the written consent of the parents or legal guardians. Information regarding federal, state, and local policies regarding student records is available from school administrators. Parents, legal guardians, and 18-year-old students may see the contents of student permanent record folders and special education folders. The lawful release of records requires a written request, however. A parent/guardian who does not have custody of a student is allowed access to student records, unless a court order specifically disallows that right.

STUDY HALLS

The following expectations are in place for study halls:

1. Students will study quietly unless given permission by the teacher to study with another student;
2. Students may leave study hall classes only with permission of the teacher who will give them a signed pass and have them sign out on a sign-out sheet;
3. Students will bring all necessary study materials to the study hall class.
4. Students will understand and meet any other expectations as outlined by the teacher in charge.

TELEPHONES

The office phone is for emergencies only. If a student needs to use the phone they should come to the office and ask permission. They may be asked to give the reason for their call before using the main office phone. Students are not to use their personal phones during the school day. Phones are to be kept in students' lockers.

TOOLS

Students may not bring to school or be in possession of mechanical, carpentry, or hand tools such as screwdrivers, hammers, wrenches, etc.

TRESPASSING

School buildings and grounds are under the jurisdiction of the New Milford Board of Education. The unauthorized presence of anyone is a matter for police action.

VAPING

Vaping of any type is prohibited on school grounds. The possession of such products and/or devices is illegal and will result in disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension and/or expulsion. Any vape product or paraphernalia (ie: battery or charger) will be confiscated and disposed of.

VIDEO RECORDING

There are two types of video security in the school district: on buses and in the public areas of the school building. This video recording is for the purposes of safety and security. As a general rule, video recordings are not maintained in excess of two weeks, unless a clip needs to be kept as evidence in an active case. Due to privacy laws, videos will not be shared with students or parents/guardians.

VISITORS

All visitors must be buzzed into the office and present their license for identification. A badge will be printed for them and this badge must be visible during their stay.

WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU NEED HELP

From time to time students and families may have questions or concerns about their child's experience at SMS. Please refer to the following information to help you direct your inquiry to the appropriate person:

Attendance : Please call the Main Office at (860)354-2204 ext. 315.	Health Related Concerns: Please call the Nurse's Office at (860)354-2204 ext. 199	Bus Passes: Please call the Main Office at (860)354-2204.
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- Questions or concerns that pertain to a particular class should be directed to the classroom teacher. If after speaking with a teacher, you feel you need additional assistance, please utilize the following resources: Team Leader/Case Manager (Special Education/504 students), School Counselor, Head Teacher for the department, Assistant Principal/Supervisor of Special Education, Principal.

Classroom Teacher	Team Leader/Case Manager	504 Needs: School Counselor	Head Teacher of Department	Assistant Principal /Supervisor of Special Education	Principal
----->	----->	----->	----->	----->	

- Fax Numbers:
 - Principal's Office: (860)210-2217.
 - School Counseling Department: (860)354-7901
 - Nurse's Office: (860)354-3213

WHO'S WHO AT SMS?

School Counselors

<u>Name</u>	<u>Team(s)</u>	<u>Phone Ext.</u>	<u>Email</u>
Lauren D'Amico	6th Grade (Red, Yellow, Blue)	323	damicol@newmilfordps.org
Jill Strub	7 Red, 7 Yellow	322	strubj@newmilfordps.org
Beth Heller	7 Blue	328	hellerb@newmilfordps.org
Shannon Thomas	8th Grade (Red, Yellow, Blue)	325	thomass@newmilfordps.org
School Counseling Department Fax Number (860)354-7901			

Department Heads

<u>Name</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Phone Extension</u>	<u>Email</u>
Gina Bernard	ELA	153	bernardg@newmilfordps.org
Rob Hibbard	Unified Arts	352	hibbardr@newmilfordps.org
Ashley Kivela	Social Studies	203	kivelaas@newmilfordps.org
Theresa McGuinness	Mathematics	231	m McGuinness@newmilfordps.org
Mary Abrantes	Science	246	abrantesm@newmilfordps.org
Nancy Stover	World Languages	223	stovern@newmilfordps.org
Melissa Post	Special Education	305	slaterj@newmilfordps.org

Team Leaders

<u>Name</u>	<u>Team(s)</u>	<u>Phone Ext.</u>	<u>Email</u>
Amy Marsan	6 Red	251	marsana@newmilfordps.org
Jennifer Correia	6 Yellow	150	correiaj@newmilfordps.org
Katelyn Cafarelli	6 Blue	145	cafarellik@newmilfordps.org
Kayleen Soper	7 Red	206	soperk@newmilfordps.org
Daniele Shook	7 Yellow	210	shookd@newmilfordps.org
Danelle Kulbeida	7 Blue	247	kulbeidak@newmilfordps.org
Sean Mahon	8 Red	216	mahons@newmilfordps.org
Robyn Hicks	8 Yellow	228	hicksr@newmilfordps.org
Laura Ramdin	8 Blue	224	ramdinl@newmilfordps.org

Administration

<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Phone Ext.</u>	<u>Email</u>
	Assistant Principal (Last Names A-L)	311	powersj@newmilfordps.org
Alicia Hynes	Assistant Principal (Last Names M-Z)	311	hynesa@newmilfordps.org
Shannon Surreira	Assistant Principal	311	surreiras@newmilfordps.org
Lauren Bergner	Supervisor, Special Education	314	bergnerl@newmilfordps.org
Jennifer Powers	Principal	310	powersj@newmilfordps.org

SECTION 2: ACADEMICS

PROGRAM OF STUDIES

The following course requirements are in place for students at SMS. All courses at SMS are graded using a traditional grading model. Course placements are made based on a variety of factors and data points, with the goal of helping all learners grow in each academic area.

Grade 6 Students

The following core courses are generally taken by all 6th grade students at SMS: ELA – Reading, ELA – Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science.

In addition to the core classes listed above, 6th grade students also take courses in the Unified Arts. Please click [here](#) to learn more about the Unified Arts offerings for the 2026/27 academic year. **Please note: Effective 2026/27 Health 6 will utilize standard grading.

Grade 7 Students

The following core courses are generally taken by all 7th grade students at SMS: ELA, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and Communication Arts.

In addition to the core classes listed above, 7th grade students also take courses in the Unified Arts. Please click [here](#) to learn more about the Unified Arts offerings for the 2026/27 academic year.

Grade 8 Students

The following core courses are generally taken by all 8th grade students at SMS: ELA, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and World Language/Cultural Connections/Reading Comprehension.

In addition to the core classes listed above, 8th grade students also take courses in the Unified Arts. Please click [here](#) to learn more about the Unified Arts offerings for the 2026/27 academic year.

Advanced Mathematics

Students at SMS may be recommended for advanced courses in mathematics. Placement in these courses is based on teacher recommendation. When making placement recommendations, teachers consider student performance on the iReady diagnostic, the SBA assessment, student performance on course assessments, student work habits, and student performance relative to the standards for mathematical practice. Any student interested in taking advanced courses in mathematics is encouraged to give their best effort on all assignments, activities, and assessments.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GRADE 9

Eighth graders who hope to be recommended for placement into honors level courses at New Milford High School need to work very hard from the beginning of eighth grade. The following are the various levels of courses offered at New Milford High School:

Level Focus

College Prep Academic courses present an in depth study of subject matter and content. Students in this level are expected to demonstrate strong basic skills in the individual subject matter. Academic courses meet the academic requirements for applying to college.

Honors courses are for students who display extremely strong academic skills, high motivation, and an ability to work with abstract concepts independently. Honors courses prepare students for highly selective colleges.

The placement of students into a particular level of a course depends on many factors. The following procedures are used by SMS teachers when recommending students for ninth grade classes:

1. The teacher of the student recommends placement into a particular level of achievement. Requirements for research and homework vary according to the level of instruction after considering:
 - a. the student's achievement;
 - b. standardized test results;
 - c. record of having completed homework in a timely and thorough manner;
2. The student's school counselor then assists with teacher recommendations. The entire scheduling process is a cooperative effort between parent, student, teacher, and counselor. Parents/guardians are encouraged to work closely with the student, the teachers, and the counselor to ensure placement in the most appropriate level of instruction.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Cheating violates the philosophy and goals of Schaghticoke Middle School. It also can serve as a basis for suspension or expulsion under Board Policy 5114. The following are some examples of cheating:

- Copying answers from others;
- Dishonestly obtaining answers or other information during tests and quizzes;
- Dishonestly receiving information about tests or quizzes before they are given;
- Stealing tests or quizzes;
- Submitting another's work or ideas as your own (plagiarism);
- Turning in the same work for more than one class without permission;
- Obtaining essays, reports, or term papers from the Internet and turning them in as your own work;
- Using either human or electronic translation to translate assignments in World Language class;
- Giving another student your work to copy and submit as his/her own;
- Accepting money to do the work for another student;
- Taking pictures of tests or other student assessments;
- Texting test information or answers to others;

Avoid plagiarism by citing sources for the information included in your work that is not your original oral, written, or visual composition. There are many websites that show how to write a citation that you can use. A citation usually includes the author(s), where the information came from, and when it was composed. Check with your teacher for a citation-preferred style. If a teacher suspects plagiarism the teacher will first discuss concerns with the student. If the teacher then determines that dishonesty has taken place, a disciplinary referral will be submitted to the Student's Administrator. If a student wishes to appeal a referral, they should contact their administrator.

COURSE CHANGES

As a matter of practice, no changes will be made to a student's schedule except for the following reasons:

- clear cut computer entry error
- completion of Summer School course
- level changes
- Planning and Placement Team meeting recommendation

Changes to a student's schedule will not be made for the following reasons:

- teacher change request
- student changed their mind about taking the course

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Parents of English Learners participating in a language instructional program will be notified within 30 days of their child's placement in the program. The notification will include an explanation of why, a description of the program, and the parent's rights to remove their child from the English Learners program. In addition, the notification will explain how the program will help the child to develop academically, learn English and achieve the standards necessary for promotion.

EXAMS

Mid-year and final exams are given in courses that are eligible for high school credit.

EXEMPTION FROM INSTRUCTION/HEALTH EDUCATION

A student will be exempted from instruction on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Bilingual Education, or Family Life and Sex Education upon receipt of a written request for such exemption from his/her parent or guardian. In addition, a student will be excused from participating in, or observing animal dissections as part of classroom instruction upon a written request from the student's parent or guardian. The student must complete an alternate assignment determined by the school.

FLEX PERIOD – WIN/ADVISORY/3TR

All students at SMS will have a flex period daily. This period is scheduled in tandem with lunch, either before or after. During each student's flex period, all students will participate in various learning experiences. This period of time is designed to provide an opportunity for students to access their teachers for extra help, enrichment, or other experience. Periodically throughout the year, students will be engaged in advisory activities linked to Social Emotional Learning. At times, the school/students will be notified to hold our Take Time to Read (3TR) initiative during this time. The purpose and goal of 3TR is to stress and encourage reading. During this period, students will read material of their choosing or a material encouraged by their teacher. Both Advisory and 3TR are also part of the NMHS schedule.

GUIDELINES FOR USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

New Milford School District Guidelines for Artificial Intelligence

Purpose

AI is a rapidly changing tool that affects the way we learn and interact with our world. New Milford Public School District recognizes the potential of AI, when used appropriately, as it also teaches students about computer literacy and prepares them for a future where AI is prevalent. These guidelines aim to establish responsible and ethical usage of AI programs such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and other platforms in teaching and learning.

New Milford Public Schools uses the following to define AI.

A technology system, including but not limited to ChatGPT, capable of learning patterns and relationships from data, enabling it to create content, including but not limited to text, images, audio, or video, when prompted by a user. (Waterford, Rocky Hill, South Windsor policies, looking for proper citations.)

Responsible Usage for Students

Students must comply with the District's Student Code of Conduct and Appropriate Use of Technology as stated in the handbook.

AI tools should be used to enhance learning, critical thinking, and creativity.

AI can assist with research, writing, problem-solving, and tutoring, but should not replace student effort.

Students should cite AI-generated content when appropriate and clarify their use of AI in assignments as directed by teachers.

Responsible Usage for Teachers

Teachers are invited to use district-approved AI tools (ex: Gemini, Canva) for enhancing instruction and assessments while maintaining transparency and protecting student privacy.

It is recommended that teachers model appropriate usage of AI tools.

Irresponsible Usage

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Generating inappropriate, offensive, or misleading content.
- Impersonating others in a harmful way by creating false information.
- Harassing, bullying, or engaging in unethical behavior.

Misinformation & Bias

AI-generated content should be fact-checked and not assumed to be accurate.

Caution should be exercised when using AI, as it may reflect societal, economic, or political bias, resulting in unfair discriminatory outcomes.

Privacy & Security

AI usage must comply with school and district data privacy policies.

The school reserves the right to monitor AI usage and restrict access if necessary.

Students and staff will use district-approved AI tools.

Students and staff should not share sensitive or confidential information with AI tools.

Accountability & Compliance

Students must disclose when and how AI was used in an assignment, providing proper citation when applicable.

Any assessment and/or assignment is subject to a verbal review with the teacher and/or administrator.

Students should be prepared to explain and discuss their work without AI's contribution or assistance.

HOMEBOUND TUTORING

Students who are absent for an extended period of time because of illness may request home instruction upon completion and acceptance of the medical questionnaire. All parent requests for home instruction will be directed to the student's Administrator and will be provided for medical reasons that meet the State and Federal mandates for such services. Once instruction has been approved, a teacher will report for a period of two hours per subject each week. All instruction will take place at the public library.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, circumstances may sometimes require that instruction be provided remotely or virtually, which will be at the discretion of the school administration. If it is determined that instruction needs to take place in the home, an adult person must be present in the home during the instruction period. Any questions or problems should be directed to administration.

HOMEWORK

The purpose of homework is to help students become self-directed, independent learners and is related to the educational progress of the student. It serves to help all students reach their instructional goals.

Specific homework assignments may strengthen basic skills; extend classroom learning; stimulate and further interests; reinforce independent study skills; develop initiative, responsibility, and self-direction; stimulate worthwhile use of leisure time; and acquaint parents with the student's work in school.

HONOR ROLL

Eligibility for Honor Rolls:

To recognize outstanding scholastic achievement, motivate students to do well in their studies, and teach students the importance of meeting all their responsibilities, the Board of Education hereby establishes the following categories of honors and the criteria for eligibility for said honors.

Highest Honors:	All grades 90 or better in all subjects.
High Honors:	An average of 90 or better in all subjects. No grade below 70.
Honors:	An average of 85 or better in all subjects. No grade below 70.

MAKE-UP WORK

Generally, students have two (2) class periods for each day of absence to complete make up work. If the work is not made up at the end of the marking period, the existing grade will be registered on the report card. If the student is being allowed a grace period to get caught up, the grade on the report card will be accompanied by this comment, "This grade reflects incomplete work that must be completed within ten (10) school days after the close of the marking period." If the work is made up, the teacher will alter the grade. If not, the grade remains as published on the report card.

Make-up Work Missed Due to Approved Absence/Tardy

1. Students may make up work for excused absences. Students will have two class days for each day absent in which to complete make-up work, unless determined otherwise by mutual agreement of the teacher and the student.
2. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain assignments from the teacher or classmates for absences of up to three (3) days. In the event of long-term excused absence from four (4) days up to three (3) weeks, a parent/guardian may request in writing that the school counselor send assignments home.

PARENT PORTAL

The New Milford Public School District is continuing its efforts to communicate with parents and guardians of students. Powerschool, our student information system, allows secure access to parents through the Parent Portal. Parent Portal will allow parents and guardians to create a single parent account that will give access to all their children in the district. This web-based system will allow you to stay informed of your child's grades and attendance via the Internet. Find out what is going on at your child's school anytime, anywhere! With the parent portal, you can see your child's class assignments, email teachers, view grades, and access school bulletins.

Since our school district has transitioned over to a new Student Information System, more information will be shared regarding access to the new Portal.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Proper footwear and athletic attire are required for students in the physical education classes and sports programs. Students will change out of school clothes and into proper athletic attire. To provide a safe

learning environment, each student is required to have proper footwear and all jewelry including earrings be removed. In addition, no gum or candy is allowed during physical education class. Due to the physical nature of class, jewelry of any kind is not allowed during class participation.

Locks will be issued for use in the locker rooms. Each student is provided with an individual locker for gymnasium sneakers and clothing as well as a large clothes storage locker for use during physical education classes. Students are to keep lockers locked for protection of personal property during classes. The school cannot be held responsible for items lost or stolen. Students will be charged \$5 for lost gym locks.

Physical Education Excuse Notes

Physical Education is mandated by Connecticut State Law. It is a subject in which the grade is based on in-class participation. When a child cannot participate in a day's activity, he/she is missing valuable class time. A statement from a certified physician is required for exemption from physical education classes. After a reasonable number of written excuses (2) from the nurse or from home, a child is required to make up the class time missed for that marking period. For every class beyond three that is not made up, the student's grade for that marking period will be reduced by five (5) points. Participating in structured after school classes will meet the make-up requirement.

PROMOTION

Students in the 8th grade that are not meeting with success academically may be required to complete summer programming to be considered for promotion to high school. The determination regarding whether or not summer programming will be using a variety of data points including but not limited to report card grades, student performance on diagnostic screeners, student performance on standardized assessments, teacher input, and attendance. For more information regarding promotion, retention, and acceleration, please refer to the appropriate Board of Education policy on the New Milford Public Schools website.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

The District believes children's social and emotional development are essential underpinnings/foundations to school readiness and academic success. Therefore, the District's educational program has included social and emotional learning and development to support the learning of skills needed to prepare students for careers, college and life. SEL teaches the skills we all need to handle ourselves, our relationships, and our work, effectively and ethically. The key characteristics of the SEL program include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

SECTION 3: POLICIES

Board of Education policies are available on the district's website at www.newmilfordps.org. The policies are subject to modifications by the Board at any time.

ADVERTISING

The public schools maintain careful controls on the way in which students are exposed to materials and announcements, other than those directly related to school sponsored programs and activities. Caution is exercised to prevent exploitation of the system and its students. District-prescribed standards shall be met.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT & SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensures support for individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities are provided a free and appropriate education (FAPE), and are accommodated and employed without discrimination related to their disabilities.

It is the intent of the District to provide a free and appropriate public education to each Section 504/ADA qualified and eligible student with a disability within its jurisdiction, as defined in 28 CFR, Parts 35 and 36, of the Amendments to Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II and Title III.

Section 504 prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities (both students and staff members) by school districts receiving federal assistance of any kind for any program or activity. Districts may not discriminate against any person with a disability, regardless of whether the program or activity after enrollment, may also take a screening exam.

All individuals who are disabled or "handicapped" are protected under Section 504. However, individuals who have been determined to be "handicapped" under Section 504 may not be considered disabled under IDEA. IDEA, which can be viewed as a subcategory of Section 504, provides for special programming or placement, while Section 504 protects the rights of individuals with handicaps. Under IDEA, students are qualified for services under 13 IDEA disabling conditions; specially designed individual education programs are planned for each student by Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams. Under Section 504, students with "handicaps" are entitled to special accommodations to ensure that they can participate in and benefit from public education and programs, and a 504 accommodation plan is designed for each student according to individual needs.

Section 504 is not an aspect of special education, but is, rather, a responsibility of the comprehensive general public education system. Unlike an eligibility system based on clinic categories of disabilities, Section 504 works on a more functional premise. Under 504 [29 U.S.C. & § 706(8)] a person is considered to have a disability if that person:

1. has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities;
2. has a record of such an impairment; or
3. is regarded as having such an impairment

While Section 504 provides a means for preventing discrimination against students with disabilities, this does not mean that 504 plans must focus on the disabling condition or on addressing the disability directly. Rather, 504 plans offer a means for focusing on students' strengths, for capitalizing on what students bring to the instruction process – not on what they lack.

Students with disabilities, pursuant to Section 504 and/or ADA will be provided a free appropriate public education which may include, but is not limited to, providing a structured learning environment; repeating and simplifying instructions about in-class and homework assignments; supplemented verbal instructions with visual instructions; adjusting class schedules, modifying test delivery; computer-assisted instructions; using modified textbooks and tailoring homework assignments.

Should you have any questions regarding Section 504, please call either your child's school principal or the Civil Rights Coordinator, Dr. Kimberly Culkin for the New Milford School District at (860) 355-8406.

Any eligible person, including any student, parent/guardian, staff member or other employee who feels that he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of disability may submit a written complaint to the district's designated Section 504 Coordinator Holly Hollander within 30 days of the alleged occurrence.

CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT, SEXUAL ASSAULT

All school employees, including teachers, superintendents, administrators, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, paraprofessionals and other professional school staff including guidance counselors, school counselors, paraprofessionals, social workers, psychologists, licensed nurses, physicians, licensed behavior analysts, and substitute teachers are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm or sexual assault by a school employee to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receive training in their use, as required by state law.

Reporting of child abuse, neglect and sexual assault by a school employee is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse, neglect or a sexual assault a report will be made. The school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies in all cases.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment or neglect are also considered child abuse.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The district will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, or disability. No student will be excluded on such a basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources. Programs and activities shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by law. Assistant Superintendent Holly Hollander is the designated district compliance officer, who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

PESTICIDE APPLICATION

Only certified pesticide applicators shall be used in schools for any non-emergency pesticide use in school buildings or on school grounds. Pesticide applications are limited to non-school hours and when activities are not taking place. Areas to receive pesticide application will be posted and a written record of all pesticide applications will be maintained for five years. Parents/guardians and staff who want to receive advance notice of all pesticide use will be listed on a registry and such notice will be provided as required by law.

PHOTOGRAPHS

From time-to-time during the school year, school personnel and/or the media take photographs. If a parent/guardian does not want their child to be photographed for school use, school website use or for media purposes, the school office must be alerted in writing. Photos of individual and classroom groups are taken annually, which may be purchased by parents/guardians, but they are not obligated to do so.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

All students shall have in the regular school day, time devoted to physical exercise, of not less than twenty minutes in total, unless altered for a student by a Planning and Placement Team for a child requiring special education. Such physical exercise can be a combination of planned physical education classes, recess, and/or teacher-directed classroom activities. The period of physical activity will not be taken away from an elementary student as a form of punishment. In addition, students in all grades, K-12, cannot be assigned physical activity as a form of punishment. School employees may not prevent a student in elementary school from participating in recess or in other sustained opportunities for physical activity during classroom learning as a form of discipline.

PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG USE

School personnel are prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, district medical advisor, school psychologists, school social workers and school counselors, may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner. Further, the District is prohibited from requiring a child to get a prescription before he/she may attend school, be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education or receive special education.

REQUIRED ANNUAL NOTICES

[Required Annual Notices](#)

RIDESHARING SERVICES

The Board of Education does not condone students leaving the school campus in third-party ridesharing vehicles (e.g. Uber, Lyft) and will prohibit minors from using them unless accompanied by an adult.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The right to inspect desks, lockers and other equipment assigned to students may be exercised by school officials to safeguard students, their property and school property. An authorized school administrator may search a student's locker or desk under either of the following conditions:

1. There is reason to believe that the student's desk or locker contains contraband material.
2. The probable presence of contraband material presents a serious threat to the maintenance of discipline, order, safety and health in school.

This document serves as advance notice that school board policy allows desks and lockers to be inspected if the administration has reason to believe that materials injurious to the best interests of students and the school are contained therein.

Under special circumstances, school officials may search students, particularly if there is reasonable suspicion that a student possesses illegal matter, such as a dangerous weapon or illegal drugs. Students must be aware that such items are forbidden both on school property and at school-related activities.

Student vehicles parked on school grounds may be searched if there is reasonable cause to search. The District may use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used on lockers and vehicles parked on school property. Searches of classrooms, common areas or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. Drug-sniffing dogs will not be used to sniff students. A locker, a vehicle, or an item in the classroom to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials.

STUDENT RECORDS

A student's school records are confidential and are protected by federal and state law from unauthorized inspection or use. A cumulative record is maintained for each student from the time the student enters the district until the student withdraws or graduates. This record moves with the student from school to school.

By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The Superintendent is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated. Records may be reviewed during regular school hours upon completion of the written request form. The record's custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

Parents of a minor or of a student who is a dependent for tax purposes, the student (if 18 or older), and school officials with legitimate educational interests are the only persons who have general access to a student's records. "School officials with legitimate educational interests" include any employee such as an administrator, teacher, support staff, Board of Education member, attorney, agents, or facilities with which the district contracts for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as their attorneys and consultants, who are:

1. Working with the student;
2. Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for a student with disabilities under IDEA or an individually designed program for a student with disabilities under Section 504;
3. Compiling statistical data; or
4. Investigating or evaluating programs.

Certain other officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records. Parental consent is required to release the records to anyone else. When the student reaches 18 years of age, only the student has the right to consent to release of records.

The parent's or student's right of access to, and copies of, student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records, such as teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher and records pertaining to former students after they are no longer students in the district, do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

A student over 18 and parents of minor students may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district refuses the request to amend the records, the requester has the right to a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the requester has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, parents and the student are not allowed to contest a student's grade in a course through this process. Parents or the student have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with the law regarding student records. The district's policy regarding student records is available from the principals or superintendent's office.

Parents may be denied copies of a student's records (1) after the student reaches age 18 and is no longer a dependent for tax purposes; (2) when the student is attending an institution of post-secondary education; (3) if the parent fails to follow proper procedures and pay the copying charge; or (4) when the district is given a copy of a court order terminating the parental rights. If the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals and the parents are unable to view the records during regular school hours, upon written request of the parent, one copy of the record will be provided at no charge.

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it, unless the parent objects to the release of any or all directory information about the child. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days after the issuance of this handbook. Directory information includes a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade levels, photograph, e-mail address, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received in school, and most recent previous school attended.

Military recruiters or institutions of higher learning shall have access to secondary school students names, addresses and telephone listings, unless a parent/guardian or secondary student aged 18 or over requests in writing that such information not be released.

The District will release to the Parent Teacher Association the names, addresses, telephone number and grade levels of students (unless the District is informed by September 15 of the school year that designation of such directory information has been refused as to a particular student) provided such information is to be used by the PTA for its own school activities or school business.

The District, when a student moves to a new school system or charter school, will send the student's records to the new district or charter school within ten business days of receiving written notice of the move from the new district. Unless the parents/guardians of the student authorize the record transfer in writing, the sending District is required to send a notice when the records are sent to the new district. Parents and eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the Requirements of FERPA. Complaints may be addressed to: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 5400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202-4605.

The district's HIPPA Privacy Officer is Dr. Kimberly Culkin.

TEACHER AND PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Parents have the right to request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s). The response will indicate whether the teacher is certified for the subject matter and grade taught; the teacher's undergraduate major and any graduate degrees or certifications a teacher may have. Parents will also be advised, if requested, as to whether the child is provided service by paraprofessionals and their qualifications.

TESTING

All students in grades 3 through 8 inclusive and grade 11 shall annually take a statewide mastery examination in reading, language arts and mathematics. Students in grades 5, 8 and 11 shall annually take a statewide mastery examination in science. Special education students participate in mastery testing programs except in the rare case when participation in an alternate assessment is detrimental to the student's IEP. In order to graduate students must meet District standards for graduation, in addition to required course credits. The mastery examination test is one of the measures to be used to determine if students have met the identified standards. Student scores on each component of the statewide grade 11 state assessment test may be included on transcripts and permanent records. All English learners are required to participate in all content areas of the state summative assessment.

VIDEO RECORDING ON SCHOOL BUSES AND THE SCHOOL CAMPUS

The district has installed video recording equipment on school buses to monitor school transportation and discipline. Videotaping will be done randomly during the school year, students will not be notified when a recording device has been installed and in use on their bus. Recording will be viewed by the administration. Students violating bus conduct rules will be notified and disciplinary action will be taken. Videotapes shall be treated as protected student records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Video equipment is used to enhance the safety and security of all individuals. It is also used to monitor student behavior in common areas or campus. Video surveillance cameras are used in public areas and school buses for security and to assist in maintaining student safety. The principal or his/her designee will review the tapes routinely and document students' misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the District's discipline policy. Any student, staff member, or visitor to the school is prohibited from tampering with or damaging the school's video surveillance equipment.

VISITORS

Parents and other visitors are welcome to visit (district) schools. All visitors must first report to the principal's office. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time shall be permitted only if they are pre-scheduled with the principal's approval, and such visits shall not be permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment.

All doors that open to the outside of any school must remain locked in order to preserve the safety and security of students and staff. Unauthorized persons shall not be permitted in school buildings or on school grounds. School principals are authorized to take appropriate action to prevent such persons from entering the building or from loitering on the grounds. Such persons will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior or uncivil discourse will not be permitted. Visits cannot interfere with the educational program of the school nor interrupt teaching activities.

WELLNESS

Student wellness, including good nutrition and physical activity, is promoted through the District's educational program, school activities, and meal programs. Federal and state standards will be met pertaining to all foods and beverages available for sale to students. A sequential program of physical education is provided, in addition to time in the elementary school day for supervised recess.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

If a student needs to withdraw from school during the school year, the student's parent/guardian must complete a withdrawal form and obtain all necessary signatures. All books, materials, athletic equipment and other equipment loaned by the school must be returned or paid for by the student or his/her parents/guardians.

SECTION 4: STUDENT CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE

Maintaining discipline within the school is an essential component of ensuring a safe environment in which students can pursue their education and access the school's many extracurricular activities. Despite the school's implementation of PBIS strategies and the use of restorative practices, there are occasions when students may engage in conduct which constitutes a violation of the school district's disciplinary policies, and our school's behavioral expectations. At all times, students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not interfere with the ongoing operation of the school. Disruptive, discourteous, and unsafe behaviors or actions that violate the rights of others will result in disciplinary action. The use of profanity will not be tolerated at any time. Disciplinary actions may include removal from an activity, parent conference, re-teaching, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension, or expulsion.

CONDUCT

A. Students are responsible for conducting themselves properly in a responsible manner appropriate to their age and level of maturity. They must accept responsibility for misbehavior and engage with school staff to identify how a different choice of action could result in a better outcome. The district has authority over students during the regular school day and while going to and from school on district transportation. This jurisdiction includes any school-related activity, regardless of time or location, and any off campus school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location.

Student responsibilities for achieving a positive learning environment in school or school related activities include:

1. Attending all classes, regularly and on time.
2. Being prepared for each class with appropriate materials and assignments.
3. Being dressed appropriately.*
4. Showing respect toward others, engaging in civil discourse.
5. Behaving in a responsible manner.
6. Paying required fees and fines.
7. Abiding by the code of conduct.
8. Obeying all school rules, including safety rules, and rules pertaining to Internet safety.
9. Seeking change in school policies and regulations in an orderly and responsible manner, through appropriate channels.
10. Cooperating with staff investigations of disciplinary cases and volunteering information relating to a serious offense.

Students who violate these rules will be subject to disciplinary action and shall be referred when appropriate to legal authorities for violation of the law.

Students at school or school-related activities are prohibited from:

1. Engaging in academic dishonesty, including cheating, intentionally plagiarizing, wrongfully giving or receiving help during an academic examination and wrongfully obtaining test copies or scores.
2. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or damage property.
3. Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.
4. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward other students or staff.
5. Disobeying directives from school personnel or school policies, rules, and regulations.

6. Being disrespectful or directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward teachers or other school employees.
7. Playing with matches, fire, or committing arson.
8. Committing robbery or theft.
9. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by the school, other students, or school employees.
10. Disobeying school rules on school buses.
11. Fighting, committing physical abuse, or threatening physical abuse.
12. Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail; that is, forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force.
13. Name-calling, making ethnic or racial slurs or derogatory statements that may substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
14. Engaging in inappropriate physical or sexual contact disruptive to the school environment or disturbing to other students.
15. Assaulting a teacher, staff member or other individual.
16. Selling, giving, delivering, possessing, using, or being under the influence of drugs such as: marijuana; a controlled substance or drug; or an alcoholic beverage.
17. Possessing a deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, firearm, martial arts weapon, or weapon facsimile.
18. Possessing prescription drugs which are given to a person other than to whom the drug is prescribed.
19. Smoking or using tobacco products, including electronic nicotine delivery systems (e-cigarettes) and vapor products.
20. Hazing, bullying
21. Behaving in any way that disrupts the school environment or educational process.
22. Using electronic devices during the school day in school buildings, without prior approval of the principal.
23. Violating the district's Internet Safety policy and/or Online Social Networking Policy.
24. Cheating, plagiarizing, including by electronic means.
25. Threatening in any manner, including orally, in writing, or via electronic communication, a member of the school including any teacher, a member of the school administration or another employee, or a fellow student.
26. Taking, storing, disseminating, transferring, viewing or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd or otherwise illegal images or photographs, whether by electronic data transfer or other means, including but not limited to texting and emailing.
27. Violating any state or federal law which would indicate that the student presents a danger to any person in the school or to school property.
28. Damaging in a willful manner school electronic equipment and/or software.

B. Dangerous Weapons and Instruments

No guns, knives or any other objects, including martial arts weapons and facsimiles of weapons, capable of threatening or causing injury or death may be brought onto school grounds. Any object used to cause injury will be considered a weapon. Violators will be subject to arrest and prosecution, as well as, appropriate disciplinary action. Any student found to possess a weapon on school grounds or during a school-activity will be recommended for expulsion from school. An expelled student may apply for early readmission to school. Such readmission is at the discretion of the Board of Education. The Board or Superintendent, as appropriate, may condition such readmission on specified criteria.

C. Dress Code:

Student dress may be regulated and students are encouraged to dress in clothing appropriate to the school situation. Restrictions on freedom of expression may be applied whenever the mode of dress is unsafe, disruptive to the educational process or contrary to law. Administrators will use reasonableness and discretion when determining the appropriateness of attire. The school staff will enforce the dress code in a consistent manner that does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income or body type/size. Enforcement of the dress code will be gender neutral.

Any school dress which impairs safety or increases the risk of injury to self or others, causes discomfort to others (e.g., uncleanliness, malodorousness, inappropriate language), causes distraction or disruption of the learning environment, advertises or advocates the use of alcohol or drugs, pornography, or is libelous or inherently contains reasonable potential to upset and hurt others is prohibited.

D.. Smoking

Students shall not possess nor smoke or use tobacco products or e-cigarettes or vapor product devices on all school property both inside and outside, or at any school-related or school-sanctioned activity, on or off school property as provided by state and federal law.

E. Substance Abuse

As stated in the CONDUCT section of this handbook, the school prohibits the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of alcohol or controlled substances on school grounds or during school activities. Any student in violation of this will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

In addition to the prohibition pertaining to alcohol, drugs, tobacco and inhalants, the Board of Education prohibits the use of performance-enhancing drugs, including anabolic steroids and food supplements, including Creatine, by students involved in school-related athletics or any co-curricular or extracurricular school activity or program, other than use for a valid medical purpose as documented by a physician.

Substance abuse or distribution of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia including alcohol may indicate serious, underlying problems. Every effort will be made to offer student assistance, including early identification, referral for treatment to private or community agencies and aftercare support.

Students are prohibited from possessing, using, selling, delivering, manufacturing, or being under the influence of any substance containing cannabidiol (CBD) or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), regardless of whether it constitutes a controlled substance under federal laws.

Disciplinary procedures will be administered with the best interests of the student, school population and community in mind and with due consideration of the rights of students. However, consideration must be given to the fact that substance abuse is illegal and subject to criminal prosecution. Unauthorized possession, distribution, sale or consumption of dangerous drugs, narcotics or alcoholic beverages may result in a recommendation for expulsion.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE MODEL

To allow teaching and learning to take place, as well as providing a safe and orderly environment for students and staff, Schaghticoke Middle School operates under the Progressive Discipline model which includes:

- Understanding discipline as a "teachable moment" is fundamental to a positive approach to discipline.

- Incremental interventions, whenever possible, to address inappropriate behavior with the ultimate goal of teaching prosocial behavior.
- Responses coupled, when appropriate, with counseling interventions

Essentially, the responsibility for conduct is in the hands of each student. When an action by a student is not in line with an accepted standard, consequences will be applied. At SMS, the classroom teacher is the primary disciplinarian. On an as needed basis, teachers may work with students to remind them of and/or clarify expectations for appropriate behavior. If behavior that is not in alignment with our expectations continues, the teacher will contact the student's parent/guardian. A detention, to be served with the teacher during lunch or after school, may be assigned by the teacher. In some cases, the teacher may inform administration about a student's behavior via a disciplinary referral.

The administration of this policy will not solely focus on punishment but on changing and controlling inappropriate behavior. Therefore, the Progressive Discipline Model will:

1. Provide a disciplinary structure for those who need it;
2. Insure a fair, firm, and consistent enforcement of school regulations;
3. Identify the range of consequences for inappropriate behavior.
4. Support progressive consequences for multiple occurrences of the same behavior

Incremental interventions may not be appropriate in cases in which the misconduct is sufficiently serious as to constitute a basis for suspension or expulsion under Board Policy 5114. In such cases -- and except for conduct for which Connecticut law and Board Policy 5114 mandates expulsion -- the administration will determine the appropriate disciplinary consequence.

Detention

As part of the progressive discipline model, students may be assigned detention to be served during lunch and/or after school.

- Detentions can be assigned by either a teacher or an administrator. A detention assigned by a teacher is to be served with that teacher. Detentions assigned by an administrator are to be served with the administrator or administrator's designee.
- Students serving lunch detention should bring their lunch to the assigned location. They will eat during detention.
- Generally, students are allowed one day of advance when assigned a detention. The staff member that assigned the detention will communicate with the parent/guardian.
- There is no after school transportation. Families are responsible for providing transportation for their child at the conclusion of detention.
- All questions or concerns regarding an assigned detention should be directed to the teacher or administrator that assigned the detention.

Loss of Privileges

It is possible for students to be denied school privileges as a result of misbehavior. Examples of privileges which can be denied include, but are not limited to:

1. Restriction of pass privileges;
2. Extra-curricular participation;
3. Use of facilities (i.e., Library, School Store, Cafeteria, etc.);
4. Participation in social events and class activities, including end-of-the-year events;

Suspension

Students may be suspended for any of the following actions, which occur not only during the regular day but also on school buses and during school-sponsored activities including dances, sporting events, and field trips. This listing is not intended to be all-inclusive, but rather to familiarize the student with typical suspension situations. A full listing of suspendable offenses is set forth in Board Policy 5114.

1. Insubordination (unwillingness to follow directives of school staff, unwillingness to give his/her name);
2. Threatening or physical abuse of staff or students;
3. Use of offensive language or gestures;
4. Damage and/or theft of property;
5. Smoking/tobacco policy violation;
6. Leaving school building and/or grounds without permission during the school day;
7. Disruptive behavior;
8. Possession of dangerous weapons or explosives of any type;
9. Possession and/or use of unauthorized drugs or other intoxicants;
10. Truancy;
11. Title IX violation.

A suspended student is normally given one day's notice prior to serving a suspension. Unless the student's behavior presents a substantial disruption to the educational environment and orderly operation of the school, that student will be allowed to complete the school day on which this suspension is issued. The parents/guardians of a suspended student will be notified by telephone, email, or letter after the suspension is issued. No student will be suspended until that student has had an informal hearing with an administrator during which time the student will be informed of the charges and be given the opportunity to respond.

Recent Connecticut legal statutes have specified certain rights for student suspension from school for disciplinary reasons. Among these rights are: access to schoolwork missed and no reduction in grade if such work is completed to the satisfaction of the teacher, and a reasonable limit to the length and number of suspensions a student may receive before the school is obligated to seek other methods of dealing with the student. A complete explanation of these laws is available on request from the school administration.

a) In-School Suspension

"In-school" suspension is assigned for disciplinary consequences for non-injurious offenses. Absences from class by an "in-school" suspension will not result in academic penalty if all academic work is made up. The responsibility for the completion of the make-up work rests with the student. At the time of suspension, the student will be given the opportunity to obtain his/her class assignments or they will be obtained for him/her. Any student who refuses to serve an "in-school" suspension or comply with the procedures may be subject to an "out-of-school" suspension.

Students who serve in-school suspension are ineligible to participate in sports or extracurricular activities until the following day.

b) Out-Of-School Suspension

"Out-of-school" suspension is assigned for disciplinary offenses of a more serious nature. The period of "out-of-school" suspension can be from one to ten consecutive school days. During the period of "out-of-school" suspension, the **student may not participate in any school activities and is not allowed on school grounds AT ANY TIME (before, during, or after school hours) on the day(s) that the suspension is in effect. A STUDENT VIOLATING THIS RULE WILL BE CONSIDERED TRESPASSING AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO ARREST.**

Expulsion

"Expulsion" is defined as exclusion from school privileges for more than 10 consecutive days due to serious offenses. Except in emergencies, a student cannot be expelled without first being offered the opportunity to have an expulsion hearing before the Board of Education, a panel of the Board, or a hearing officer appointed by, and acting on behalf of, the Board. Connecticut law empowers the Board to expel a student for up to one calendar year.

Board Policy Section 5114 sets forth conduct for which the student can be expelled. Although such expulsions are generally within the discretion of the Board of Education, Section 10-233d of the Connecticut General Statutes and Board Policy 5114 enumerate conduct for which an expulsion is mandated. This conduct includes: 1) possession on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity of a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, or martial arts weapon; 2) possession off school grounds of such a firearm in violation of Section 29-35 of the Connecticut General Statutes; 3) possession and use such a firearm, instrument or weapon in the commission of a crime; or 4) on or off school grounds, offered for sale or distribution a controlled substance.

NOTE: It is against school policy for any student to be in possession of an implement that can be used as a weapon. The following is a partial list of items that are not permitted on school property: Chains, Knives, Razor Blades, Pipes, Pepper Spray, Batons, Bats, etc.

If you are unsure whether or not a particular item may be classified as a weapon, please check with your school administrator prior to bringing the item to school.

Conduct off school grounds that violates Board of Education policy could be cause for school-based discipline.

TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation is provided, when feasible, to all students who reside beyond a reasonable walking distance of the middle school in accordance with Board Policy 3541. Students riding school buses are bound by the same behavioral expectations in force during the school day. Violations of proper behavior on school buses may result in loss of bus privileges as well as further disciplinary consequences including suspension and expulsion. Smoking, threatening, fighting, disruptions, and use of offensive language are among behaviors that will not be tolerated on the buses. Furthermore, any student who inflicts damage upon a bus will be held financially responsible for the cost of that damage.

Students who leave school grounds during the day without authorization are not permitted back on campus to ride a bus home.

School buses are equipped with video cameras; students should be aware of the possibility of videotaping.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION CODE OF DISCIPLINE

School transportation privileges are extended to students conditioned upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Unsatisfactory student behavior on the bus may result in suspension of transportation services or such other disciplinary action that is appropriate for misconduct.

Students will be notified of their bus stop and times for pick-up and drop-off via PowerSchool prior to the start of school. Students and parents are asked to wait safely at their bus stop. Anthony Giovannone is the District's Transportation Coordinator.

Parents should park in the designated area at each school. Cars should not be parked in undesignated areas which include on the grass, in fire lanes, on the curb, etc. at any time. Parents who choose to drive their children to school and drop them off should drive into the designated drop off area with their vehicles, remain in the vehicle, and drop off their child.

The following rules shall apply to student conduct on school transportation:

1. Passengers shall follow the driver's directions at all times.
2. Passengers shall board and leave the bus in an orderly manner at the designated bus stop nearest their home.
3. Passengers shall not stand while the bus is in motion.
4. Passengers shall keep books, instrument cases, feet, and other objects out of the aisle of the bus.
5. Passengers shall not deface the bus and/or its equipment.
6. Passengers shall not extend head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window nor hold any object out of the window nor throw objects within or out of the bus.
7. Passengers shall not smoke or use any form of tobacco or vaping devices.
8. Passengers shall not eat on the bus.
9. Usual classroom conduct shall be observed. Unruly conduct, including the use of obscene language, will subject the passenger to disciplinary action.
10. Upon leaving the bus, the passenger will wait for the driver's signal before crossing in front of the bus.
11. Students must ride the bus to which they are assigned.

The following procedures shall be followed when a discipline concern arises on a bus serving a regular route or an extracurricular activity:

1. A conference involving the principal, the student passenger, the driver, and the parent(s) may be required.
2. The principal may suspend the student's bus-riding privileges. If such a suspension occurs, the parents will be notified prior to the time the suspension takes effect.
3. In the case of serious misconduct that endangers the safety of other passengers or the driver, the driver shall have the authority to remove the student and call for law enforcement assistance. The principal and parents shall be notified of the situation as soon as possible. The student shall not be provided bus service again until a conference involving all persons listed above has been held.

Disciplinary sanctions and changes in transportation for a student with a disability shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

All vehicles coming into or leaving the school grounds are subject to the regulations of the school. A student may drive to school, provided the student abides by the traffic rules and has parental permission.

Students are not allowed to go to their cars during school hours. In case of emergency, they will be given a pass to do so by the administration. Any violation of proper automobile use may result in the suspension of parking privilege or any such discipline which is appropriate for the circumstances.

Procedures for Making Requests or Filing Complaints Concerning School Transportation:

Requests for extensions and alterations of service:

These requests should be made in writing to the New Milford Public Schools Director of Operations, 25 Sunny Valley Road, Suite A,, New Milford, Connecticut, 06776. Upon request, you will be contacted within five (5) business days regarding the disposition of the request. Typically, these requests are not of an immediate or time sensitive nature.

Immediate Safety Concerns, Clarification of Existing Routes/Schedules, and Complaints Regarding Existing Transportation Services:

These requests can be made via telephone to the New Milford Public Schools Business Office, 860-354-8726.

Student Discipline Issues:

All student discipline issues should be addressed with the appropriate administrator.

Students are not to leave the building before dismissal time unless permission is granted by the office to leave early. Unless prior permission is obtained from the office, a student may leave the building only in a school bus or his/her parent's car. Students not taking a bus are to remain in their last period classes until 2:15 unless prior permission has been granted to leave before that time. Parents/guardians who are transporting students home from school must send a note in the morning and sign the student out from the office before leaving. Bus passes for students to ride a different bus will be issued for emergency reasons only, and a note from the parent is required 24 hours in advance with a phone number where the parent can be contacted. A Bus Pass/Dismissal note can be found on our website under forms. Buses are crowded, and we cannot make exceptions. Even emergency requests cannot be guaranteed. Requests for riding a different bus to visit a friend or to work on a school project are not considered emergencies. These notes should be brought to the office, or can be submitted directly from the SMS website.

The New Milford Board of Education is concerned with the safety of students in school and on the bus. The lives of many children are in the hands of the drivers on a daily basis. Following the rules listed above is essential for each child's safety. Violation of the rules is considered a serious offense since it distracts the driver and interferes with the safe operation of the bus. Such offenses will be dealt with in accordance with the Board of Education's policy on bus discipline that may include suspension of the privilege of bus transportation. We ask that you review the rules below with your child as follow-up to instructions that will be provided by teachers and bus drivers. The Board of Education wishes to thank the parents for their cooperation. Students are to be aware that a video security system may be in use on all buses. This will function as an electronic rear-view mirror and we hope that it will help to prevent inappropriate student behaviors.