

NORTHFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

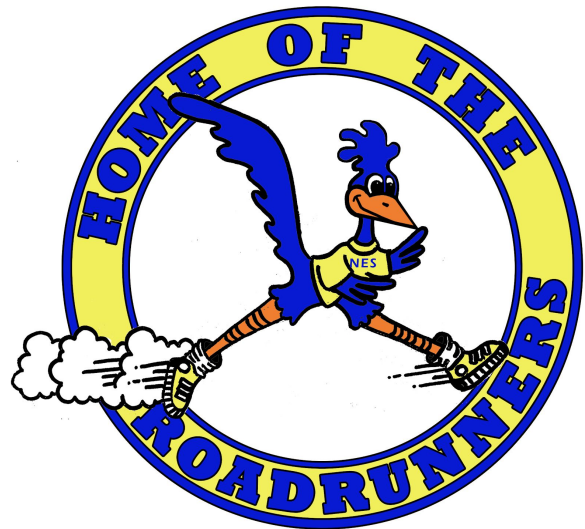
Student/Parent Handbook

2018-2019

Mrs. Cathleen Lopez
PRINCIPAL

Mrs. Colleen Golden
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

9125 Northfield Road Ellicott City, MD 21042
Telephone: 410-313-2806



This agenda belongs to:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Teacher _____

Table of Contents

Letter of Welcome	3
NES at a Glance.....	4
Procedures and Information	5-13
<i>School News and Communication</i>	
<i>Arrival and Dismissal Procedures</i>	
<i>Attendance</i>	
<i>Health Room and Health Information</i>	
<i>Northfield's Guidance Program</i>	
<i>Breakfast and Lunch</i>	
<i>Dress Code</i>	
<i>Behavior Standards</i>	
<i>Parent Visitors and Volunteers</i>	
<i>Parent Teacher Association (PTA)</i>	
<i>School Improvement Team (SIT)</i>	
<i>After School Activities</i>	
<i>Before and After School Care</i>	
Academics and Curriculum.....	14-16
<i>Student Placement</i>	
<i>Interim Progress Reports and Quarterly Report Cards</i>	
<i>Curriculum</i>	
<i>Homework Guidelines</i>	
<i>Support and Extended Services</i>	
<i>Elective Music Opportunities</i>	
Frequently Asked Questions.....	16-18
Grace's Law and Reporting Acts of Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation	19
HCPSS School Calendar	20-22

NORTHFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

9125 Northfield Rd
Ellicott City, MD 21042
410-313-2806 Phone

Dear Northfield Families,

Greetings and welcome to the 2018-2019 school year! A special welcome goes out to those of you who are new to Northfield and our school community. We hope you find this Parent/Student Handbook helpful in communicating with you many of the procedures and information you need concerning our school.

We will distribute the annual HCPSS Calendars and Student/Parent Handbook during the first week of school. A smaller version of the HCPSS calendar is found in this agenda book. We encourage you to take the time to review both the NES and HCPSS handbooks to familiarize your family with our policies and procedures.

Northfield has had a proud history in the years since its doors were first opened in 1968. We are excited to be celebrating our 50th anniversary this year! We are a LEED certified green school building, a Maryland Green School, and a National Eco School. Additionally, as a Health and Wellness school, we are committed to focusing on the whole child. Our strong partnership with the NES PTA benefits our students and community. The NES PTA helps to fund field trips, numerous cultural arts events, after school programs, and hosts many fun family events.

We think that Northfield Elementary is an outstanding school, and we will do all that we can to assure that you and your child have a rewarding experience at NES. We encourage you to become an active part of our school by supporting the PTA, and volunteering in the classroom, for PTA events, or to help with other projects.

The staff is anticipating a productive year, and we are committed to working closely with you to ensure a successful school experience for your child. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have questions or feedback.

Sincerely,

Cathleen Lopez, Principal
cathleen_lopez@hcpss.org

Colleen Golden, Assistant Principal
colleen_golden@hcpss.org

NES AT A GLANCE

Address: 9125 Northfield Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Phone: (410) 313-2806

Fax: (410) 313-2810

Northfield Website: www.nes.hcpss.org

Northfield PTA website: www.northfieldpta.org

Howard County Public School System website: www.hcpss.org

MD State Department of Education website: www.marylandpublicschools.org

Social Media

Twitter: hcpss_nes

Art Instagram: Search NES_arts

Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/z36jttr>

School Hours: 8:40 a.m. to 3:10 p.m.

Mascot: Roadrunner

School Colors: Royal Blue and Gold

Principal: Cathleen Lopez (cathleen_lopez@hcpss.org)

Assistant Principal: Colleen Golden (colleen_golden@hcpss.org)

Guidance Counselor: Christi Bello (christi_bello@hcpss.org)

PTA President: Kalpana Vijay (president@northfieldpta.org)

Procedures and Information

School News and Communication

The school website is the main source of information for families. *The Northfield News* is published by e-news email every other Friday. Periodic Enews and texts are sent to alert families to special announcements. Any necessary emergency announcements are also communicated through Enews and parents can sign up for emergency text notifications by visiting <http://www.hcpss.org/hcpss-news/>. The NES PTA e-news is also sent via the e-news email system weekly. Parents of registered students are automatically enrolled to receive all e-news information and text messages. It is important that the parent's mobile number is listed as a mobile number in Family File if you want to receive text alerts. We also encourage parents to download the HCPSS Mobile App to receive information as soon as it is posted to our website and have access to the school calendar at your fingertips.

General Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Our arrival and departure procedures and guidelines are designed to ensure the safety of our students. Your adherence to guidelines and traffic patterns is necessary and appreciated.

The doors open for students at 8:25 a.m. Bus riders generally arrive between 8:25 a.m. and 8:35 a.m. Students who walk, bike, or are driven by car should arrive no earlier than 8:25 a.m. Prior to that time, staff members are not available to supervise students. Therefore, for the safety of your child(ren), do not leave them unattended at school prior to 8:25 a.m. We begin dismissing buses at 3:10 p.m., and buses generally leave the lot by 3:20 p.m.

Car Rider Pick Up/Drop Off Procedures

All cars will be directed to form a line in the Dunloggin Middle School parking lot. Students will be able to exit or enter their cars when the car reaches the curb closest to NES. Children need to enter and exit the car on the passenger side. Staff members will be there to assist with car rider arrival and dismissal. Plan to be in the loop by 3:10 p.m., when car riders are dismissed. **Please help us to expedite the dismissal process by displaying your student's name on a sign posted on the passenger side window.** The signs are available in the NES front office and will be distributed during the first few weeks of school. Please remind your child to wait until your car is completely stopped prior to approaching your vehicle for loading. **Due to safety, parking in Dunloggin parking spaces is not permitted during dismissal.** Parents must use the car rider pick up/drop off loop or park in the lot across from NES.

Please note that the speed limit on school property is 15 mph. By law, cars must stop for pedestrians at crosswalks and for stop signs held by staff.

Early Dismissal Procedures

Parents picking up their children prior to regular dismissal time must come to the office **before 2:55 p.m.** to sign them out. Parents are requested to send in an HCPSS "Note From Home" form that communicates your child's early dismissal. The note minimizes the disruption to the class, has your child prepared, and gives us a record of the early dismissal. The notepads will be sent home the first week of school for kindergarten students and new families. Please note, students will not be called to the office until you arrive to sign them out. We cannot have students in the office waiting until parents arrive.

Change in Dismissal Procedures for your Child(ren)

If your child will not be following his/her regular dismissal procedure, he/she must have a note both signed and dated. This includes staying for after school programs. Children are not permitted to ride the bus home with their friends unless permission is granted in advance and a note is received by both your child and the friend's parent. Permission is only granted if there is space available on the bus and the child needs to ride with a friend for childcare purposes.

Bus Riders

Bus schedules and routes are located on the HCPSS website School and Bus Locator page. In the morning, bus riders should plan to be at the bus stop 10 minutes before their stated departure time. Per HCPSS Policy, children are not allowed to ride a different bus than the one they are assigned and students who live in a walk zone are not permitted to ride buses.

Transportation-related concerns should be directed to Colleen Golden, Assistant Principal (colleen_golden@hcpss.org) or the Howard County Public Schools Department of Transportation at (410) 313-6726. Our HCPSS area supervisor for transportation is Brian Nevin (brian_nevin@hcpss.org).

Bike Riders

We encourage students and families to ride their bikes or walk to school! Each student must provide his/her own bike lock and secure his/her bike to the racks provided by NES. Northfield is not responsible for bike damage or theft. To ensure student safety, and compliance with Maryland law, all students are required to wear helmets. Additionally, students will not be allowed to ride their bikes on the sidewalks or in the parking lots at NES. They will need to walk alongside their bike until they are off school grounds.

Inclement Weather/ Emergency School Closing

If it is necessary to delay the school start time or close for the day, the Superintendent of Howard County Public Schools will make the determination by 5:30 a.m. Please check announcements of late openings or school closings on the HCPSS website, www.hcpss.org. If weather conditions deteriorate throughout the school day or there is an emergency that necessitates an early closing, NES will dismiss children according to the procedure parents specified in HCPSS Family File. It is important that parents keep their information updated by visiting www.hcpss.org/connect. If school is closed for the day or closes early, all school, community, and after school activities will be postponed and/or canceled.

Attendance

Children arriving to school after 8:40 a.m. must report to the front office to obtain a late pass that will admit him/her to class. A parent or guardian must accompany the student to sign him/her into school.

A student is counted present for a **full day** if the student is in attendance 4 hours or more of the school day. A student is counted present for a **half day** if in attendance for at least 2 hours of the school day, but less than 4 hours.

Absences

It is a Maryland state law that when a child is absent, she/he will be marked unexcused unless the child's teacher receives a note stating the reason for the absence within 2 school days. If a note is not received within 2 school days, the student's absence remains coded as unexcused.

Families are permitted 3 days per school year to be used for family discretion. If families use more than three days, the absence is termed unlawful, which means teachers are not required to provide work for the extra days.

Only 12 parent notes can be accepted for illness per school year. After 12 notes, a note from a doctor must be provided.

Health Room/Health Information

NES has a Health Assistant or designated staff member every day during school hours to tend to sick children and administer medication. We also have a Registered Nurse on campus that we share with Dunloggin. Any questions about the health room can be directed to our Registered Nurse, Amy Wilson (amy_wilson@hcpss.org) or our Health Assistant, Hope Brown (hope_brown@hcpss.org).

All medication - both over-the-counter and prescription medications must have a written order from a physician. These forms are available from the health room and all information on these forms must be completed. Exception: non-medicated cough drops may be dispensed by the health room staff with written parental authorization. The policy allows up to three non-medicated cough drops per day, for up to five days. Medications of any kind must be brought to the health assistant by the parent. This includes non-medicated cough drops. The only exception is in specific cases where a doctor's order requires to student to carry medication. For more information about medication procedures and/or to download important forms, please visit: www.hcpss.org/schools/health-services

Parents or guardians will be notified of serious illness or injury and will be asked to come pick up their child. In case of an emergency, the procedure outlined on the student's Family File will be followed. If a parent can't be reached for serious injuries, 911 will be called. For less serious injuries, a note will be sent home with your child.

If a child has a sore throat, earache, rash, headache, runny nose (non allergy-related), severe cough, vomiting, diarrhea, OR has a fever, they must stay home until their symptoms subside or he/she is on medication and has been given clearance by his or her doctor. According to Health Department regulations, children must be fever-free for 24 hours without benefit of analgesics (Tylenol or Advil, for example) before returning to school.

A doctor's note is required for an exemption from physical education classes lasting longer than three days.

Students with Allergies

Accidental exposure resulting in life threatening food allergies can occur at any time. Howard County Public School System's goal is to provide a safe school environment for all students. It is important for parents and staff to work in collaboration to address the safety needs of students with severe food allergies.

Goals:

- To ensure staff awareness of students with severe food allergies in school
- To ensure staff awareness of the seriousness of food allergies
- Minimize the potential for exposure to the food allergen for students with food allergies
- To ensure staff awareness of the signs and symptoms of a severe allergic reaction
- To provide prompt and effective intervention in the event of an allergic reaction

Processes:

- Cluster Nurse provides training for staff in the recognition of a severe allergic reaction, the use of emergency epinephrine and proper follow-up emergency procedures including calling 911.
- The health room staff notifies teachers and staff who monitor the cafeteria of those students with food allergies when a student needs to sit at the Peanut Free Table.
- Parents are responsible for notifying the health room and/or their student's homeroom

teacher if they desire their child to sit at the Peanut Free Table. Please note, the table is peanut free. If your child has allergies to other types of nuts, school staff will make the table nut free upon request.

- Parents are encouraged to meet with the health room staff and student's teachers to discuss any special needs.
- In the event that the parent has not provided an epinephrine auto-injector (Epipen) in school, the emergency stock epinephrine dose will be given and 911 will be called. Students with known food allergies are strongly encouraged to have medication in the health room in the event of an emergency. Only prescribed medications will accompany students on field trips.
- Field trips: Prescribed medications in the health room will be sent on all field trips. Teachers are responsible for carrying these medications. Medications will travel on the same bus as the student. All staff has been trained in the use of epinephrine auto-injectors (Epipens) and the appropriate time to administer. Parent chaperones are not allowed to carry or administer any medications.
- Important food and nutrition services information:
<http://www.hcpss.org/food-services/nutrition-allergen-information/>

Northfield's Guidance Program ...It's for Everyone!

The elementary guidance program provides assistance in academic, emotional, and social adjustment areas and is available to **all** students. Every school in Howard County has at least one full-time counselor. At NES, the program has five components in order to assist students in reaching their fullest potential: individual, group, classroom lessons, parent support, and staff consultations. We offer a wide range of guidance topics including: boosting self-esteem, lessening anxieties/fears, stress management, friendship and communication skills, study and conflict resolution skills, transitioning to the next grade, career guidance, and more as needed. Teachers may enroll students in guidance groups that focus on specific objectives and strategies to assist each child. Please contact our school Guidance Counselor, Christi Bello at christi_bello@hcpss.org if you have any questions.

Breakfast and Lunch Program

Please visit www.hcpss.org/food-services to learn more about our breakfast and lunch programs. At this website, you can view prices, menus, and learn more about the nutrition information of the breakfast and lunch options. Parents are encouraged to put money on their child's school meals account so that he/she may purchase breakfast and lunch, as needed. Students are also able to purchase snacks during lunch shifts. Any money not spent at the end of the school year will roll over to the following school year as long as the child remains a student in the Howard County Public School System. You can add money to your child's account by visiting www.myschoolbucks.com at any time during the school year. We encourage parents to use the school meals account so that the child does not need to carry money to school. Students will be responsible for any money brought to school until lunch time.

Students are able to purchase breakfast every morning from 8:25-8:40 in the cafeteria for \$2.00 (reduced price: \$0.30). Students will eat the breakfast in the cafeteria before going to homeroom. A hot breakfast item is served one day per week. On other days, students can purchase milk, juice, cereal, yogurt, breakfast bars, and other non-perishable breakfast items.

Students may bring their lunch to school or they may purchase lunch for \$2.75 (reduced: \$0.40). **Packers must bring their own utensils.** As a green school, we encourage reusable utensils. Students who forget their lunch and do not have money will be able to debit their school meals account to receive lunch. Please note that students are not provided with cash for change, as the change is added to their school meals account. Families who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals should complete the form sent home with their child at the beginning of the year or visit www.hcpss.org/food-services to complete the online application. Students may buy snacks near the end of their lunch period. Snacks range in price from \$0.60 to \$0.75.

Due to food allergies, children are not permitted to share food. Parents who join their children for lunch in the cafeteria are not permitted to bring food for any other children. We provide a peanut free table for students with allergies.

Lunch Schedules

With the exception of early dismissal and special programs, parents are welcome to join their children for lunch. Due to liability, younger siblings and babies are not permitted in the cafeteria. If you wish to join your child for lunch, you will be required to sign in as a visitor in the front office. Your child's lunch schedule will be communicated by his/her homeroom teacher at the beginning of the school year. If you want to have lunch with your child, but are unable to do so because you are caring for a younger sibling, please call the school to learn about other options that are available.

Please note that grade-level lunch times will change on early dismissal days and are subject to change intermittently due to special programs.

Dress Code

The Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and nurturing educational environment conducive to student learning. At the same time, the Board recognizes the right of students to express themselves through their choice of personal attire. While student dress and appearance are the responsibility of students and their parents, the Board believes that dress and appearance should not interfere with any aspect of the educational process and expects that dress and appearance are consistent with all Board policy. Please see HCPSS Board of Education Policy 9210. Specifically, students cannot wear:

- Clothing that could be deemed as disruptive to the school environment.
- Head coverings unless used for religious or medical reasons
- Flip flops (for safety reasons)

PBIS Program

Northfield Elementary became a PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) school during the 2017-2018 school year. Our school wide behavior plan emphasizes learning opportunities over traditional consequences. At Northfield, we are building **respectful, responsible, and ready** students that **act with integrity** at all times. Students know these expectations and spend time reviewing them across various settings. Students can earn Rudy's Rubies for demonstrating the expected behaviors throughout the school day. Rudy's Rubies can be used to purchase various rewards and experiences which differ from classroom to classroom.

The Northfield Staff also uses restorative practices as a proactive and reactive behavioral strategy. As a proactive approach, teachers use community circles to build relationships and establish rapport between themselves and students, but more importantly, rapport between students. Community circles are a great way for students to get to know one another, create common ground, and gain greater respect for their classmates and teachers.

Restorative practices are used reactively when students have conflicts or when behaviors in a classroom are impacting the learning environment. For peer conflicts, students are asked to settle them restoratively using a series of questions designed to let each student have a voice, resolve the issue amicably, and determine how to move forward without future incidents. These types of conversations are facilitated by a teacher or staff member. When teachers are experiencing undesirable behaviors in the classroom, he or she may facilitate a community circle to discuss how to change the behavior so that all students can learn in an optimal environment. During these types of conversations, students are given a voice and are able to determine how they feel the issue should be resolved. Restorative practices give students the opportunity to be a part of the problem solving process and have long-term, positive effects on the classroom and school environment.

While our goal is always to recognize students for demonstrating positive behavior, there are times when students will make poor choices. We use these choices as a learning opportunity as much as possible, but students will still receive consequences when poor choices are made that impact a successful learning environment. At Northfield, all teachers use the 1-2-3 Magic system as a way for students to recognize and change their behavior. For low level, classroom-managed behaviors, students are given up to 3 warnings. When a child gets a 3rd warning, he or she needs to take a brief timeout. During this timeout, students are given a small label to put in their agenda book to let their parents know that they needed to take a timeout that day. This label is our way of communicating to parents that the student needed a chance to reflect on his/her behavior that day. We do not expect you to give further consequences to the child at home. Warnings do not carry over from class to class. Students are given a clean slate at the beginning of each new subject.

For higher level, office-managed behaviors, students may receive a reflection form to complete to think about their behavior and better choices that can be made the next time. Students may also receive a Disciplinary Office Referral. When students come to the office for behavioral concerns, parents will be notified via email and/or phone call.

Parent support is paramount in our effort to create a positive learning environment for all students. We appreciate your support and assistance in helping your child understand our Northfield behavior expectations. Parents will learn more about our PBIS program and restorative practices at Back to School Night events held in September and periodically throughout the school year.

Parent Visitors and Volunteers

If a parent wishes to come in to observe in his/her child's classroom, the parent must provide written notice 24 hours in advance to the classroom teacher. Upon arrival, all visitors must check in to the Lobby Guard system in the front office. You will need your a license or state-issued identification card in order to log into the system. The Lobby Guard system will print a visitor's badge that must be worn and visible for the duration of the visitor's stay at Northfield. All visitors and volunteers must follow the Guidelines for Northfield Visitors and Volunteers that are posted in the office. **Please note that siblings are not permitted during the regular school day.**

Our classroom volunteer program generally occurs between October and May each school year. Information about how to volunteer will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. According to HCPSS Board Policy, prior to volunteering in the classroom or chaperoning on field trips, parents must complete a **Confidentiality Training Course** about protecting the privacy of our students, staff, and schools. The course can be found at <http://www.hcpss.org/parents/volunteer-information/> and takes about five minutes to complete. After you complete the training, print and complete the certification form and return it to NES.

Room parents are selected by staff from parent names submitted during the first few weeks of school. Room parents help to coordinate school celebrations (such as Valentine's Day), and work closely with the PTA Hospitality Committee by serving as a liaison for ongoing staff appreciation activities. They also act as the liaison between parents and classroom teacher as hospitality needs arise in classrooms.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Executive Board meets monthly and sponsors many educational programs and school events. You do not need to be a PTA Executive Board member to attend the monthly meetings, but you do need to be a PTA member to vote at these meetings. PTA Executive Board members and committee chairpersons are elected in May for the following school year. The PTA sets its budget annually and reviews it during the course of the year. Through its fundraising efforts, the PTA provides funds to support educational and enrichment programs that otherwise would go unfunded. The PTA is always looking for volunteers to help organize the many programs it puts on each year to support the students and staff at NES. For more information about the PTA, please visit www.northfieldpta.org.

School Improvement Team (SIT)

All schools in the Howard County Public School System have a School Improvement Team (SIT). The SIT is responsible for setting goals and implementing plans to achieve identified goals. Schools are responsible for implementing state and county programs, procedures, and guidelines. At Northfield, all Instructional Team Leaders participate on the School Improvement Team and meet monthly to review and assess progress towards these goals. The PTA Executive Board provides parent input to the Northfield SIT Committee.

After School Activities

A variety of after-school activities are available to our students through the NES PTA and the Howard County Recreation and Parks Program. Watch for flyers announcing program availability, cost, and sign-up procedures. Past examples of activities have included robotics, Minecraft, yoga, floor hockey, basketball, chess, magic, foreign language, drama, cooking classes, Girls on the Run, Let Me Run (running program for boys), etc.

If your child will be staying for an after school activity at NES, it is required that you send a signed and dated note to your child's teacher each time the child will be staying afterschool.

Before and After School Care

The Columbia Association (CA) provides **before and after school care**. It is located in the NES cafeteria for kindergarten through fifth graders. Depending on the enrollment, students in third through fifth grade may have their aftercare program at Dunloggin Middle School right next door. Before school care runs from 7 a.m. until 8:25 a.m. and after school care runs from 3:10 p.m. to 6 p.m. Fully licensed by the Department of Human Resources, CA is a recreational program that offers a variety of activities and games. Snack is provided and time is given for children to do homework if they choose. The phone number for CA is 410-715-3116.

ACADEMICS AND CURRICULUM

Student Placement

Students are placed into homerooms with the intent of achieving heterogeneous groups for language arts instruction. Student achievement level, instructional level, and social/emotional strengths/needs determine initial placement. Students are placed in math groups based on past performance and an assessment at the beginning of the school year. They are continually evaluated through ongoing assessment.

All student groupings and classes are flexible, and students may be moved to another group if it is deemed to be in his/her best interest. Parents will be notified of an intended move to

another group. Please contact your child's teacher if you have any questions regarding his/her placement or performance during the year.

Interim Progress Reports and Quarterly Report Cards

Interim progress reports are issued midway through each quarter to communicate student progress. Report Cards are issued quarterly in November, February, April and June. Parent conferences are held in November and February. Parents will be able to sign up for a conference time through HCPSS Connect. Parents who wish to have additional conferences may contact the teacher to schedule an appointment.

Curriculum

The Howard County Public School System follows the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards. Information regarding grade level curriculum is provided to families during Back to School Nights and is also available on teacher Canvas pages. Parents can also learn more about the standards taught at each grade level by visiting www.hcpss.org/academics.

Homework Guidelines

NES teachers will provide homework that is engaging and varied to meet the needs of each student while enhancing subject matter covered during school hours. Homework can assist students by reinforcing previously taught concepts; exploring and extending knowledge; preparing students for future lessons; and challenging and inspiring independent learning. Grade-level specific information about homework is provided to families during Back to School Nights. Please contact your child's teacher if you have questions about homework.

Support and Extended Services

Reading Support includes services such as small group corrective reading instruction and team-teaching with the classroom teacher. This service is provided to students reading below grade level.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is instruction in speaking, listening, reading comprehension, and writing provided to students for whom Standard American English is not his/her primary language. The school system can provide interpreters for parent conferences or other parent/teacher meetings, if needed. Please contact the Northfield ESOL department or your child's teacher if you are in need of an interpreter.

Special Education Services are provided to students with individualized education plans (IEP). Contact Mrs. Lopez, Mrs. Golden, or your child's special education case manager if you have questions about IEP services.

Section 504 Plans are provided to students with a medical diagnosis that significantly impacts their ability to access his/her education. Contact Mrs. Golden if your child has a medical condition that requires specific accommodations in the classroom in order for him/her to be successful.

Gifted and Talented Program (GT) is comprised of a variety of educational opportunities including:

- *The GT Mathematics Program* (for grades 4 and 5) offers an enriched mathematics curriculum that is accelerated by two years. It replaces the general education math curriculum. This curriculum prepares students for Pre-Algebra GT in sixth grade. Students are selected for the GT Math program based on multiple data points, such as CogAT testing, MAP testing, and classroom performance. Contact your child's math teacher if you have questions about GT math placement.
- *Instructional Seminars* are designed to extend student interests beyond general exploratory experiences. Students develop a broad range of advanced-level skills in preparation for in-depth study and creation of a product on a chosen topic of interest. GT Resource Teachers provide advanced level instruction and schedule these opportunities for interested students during their recess time. Instructional Seminar products will be displayed for community viewing at Northfield's Enrichment Fair in the spring.
- *Curriculum Extension Units* offer opportunities for selected students in grades one through five to participate in thematic units that engage them in advanced-level thinking, questioning, and research. Students are nominated for participation by teachers based on academic strengths as demonstrated on a variety of performance indicators, such as assessments, test scores, and parent input. Students are also selected through talent spotting lessons given by GT teachers. Selected students receive individual letters of invitation and must obtain parental approval to participate.

Elective Music Opportunities

Northfield's music department offers a wide selection of elective opportunities for students in grades 3-5.

- *Instrumental Music* is comprised of Orchestra and Band. The orchestra program (strings) is available to students in third-fifth grade. Band (brass, woodwinds, and percussion) is available to students in fourth and fifth grade. Children provide their own instruments and time is allotted during the school day for instruction. If you are unable to provide an instrument due to financial reasons, please reach out to Mrs. Lopez or Mrs. Golden.
- *Chorus* is an elective part of the music curriculum for fourth and fifth grades.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

May my child bring a toy to school?

Children are discouraged from bringing non-school related items to school. Electronic games and toys, trading cards, and other toys are not permitted and may be taken for the day by the teacher for safekeeping. Additionally, if a student does choose to bring a non-school related item to school, Northfield is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Where can I look for lost items?

The Lost and Found bin is located inside the cafeteria. Occasionally, small lost and found items (glasses, keys, phones, small pieces of jewelry) may be placed on the Lobby Guard table inside the main office for parents to claim. Please label all of your child's personal items including clothes, lunch boxes, school supplies, etc.

How can I arrange for my child to be picked up by another parent?

You must send in a signed and dated note with your child specifying who is to pick up your child at dismissal. Howard County policy does not permit students to ride any other bus than the one they ride on a regular basis. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis for childcare purposes. Permission must be granted in advance by Mrs. Golden in consultation with the Office of Pupil Transportation.

What if my child forgets lunch or loses his/her lunch money?

Students will purchase a lunch from the cafeteria and the cost will be debited from his/her school meals account. The parents will be billed by HCPSS Food Services for the price of the meal.

What is the protocol about birthday celebrations?

The school will provide recognition for all birthdays on the public announcement system. Families are **not** to send in or distribute gifts, tokens, snacks, or treats in school. Party invitations can not be distributed in school. PTA members can access the family directory for home or email addresses for party invitations. You can also use the email address list collected by room parents at the beginning of the school year.

May my child bring our dog or another pet to school?

Per HCPSS policy, pets are not permitted on school property during arrival, dismissal, or during the school day.

Where is the guidance library and how do I check out books?

The guidance counselor has many parenting books available on a wide range of topics, including learning disabilities, ADHD, giftedness, discipline, divorce, birth order, self-esteem, depression, and homework. Donations of used books are also accepted. For information about guidance resources, please contact our guidance counselor, Mrs. Bello (christi_bello@hcpss.org).

What if my child forgets something at home that he or she needs for school?

Please make sure that your child has all of his/her school materials, instruments, lunchbox, etc. before leaving home in the morning. This will help to minimize the classroom disruptions to inform teachers and students that items have been brought in from home. If your child does forget an item, you can bring it to school and place it on the “Oops Table” in the vestibule outside of the main office. Students will be allowed to visit the table to check for items at the teacher’s discretion.

Can I visit my child or observe in the classroom?

In order to limit interruptions and distractions to teaching and learning, and to maximize safety, HCPSS has set specific procedures for classroom visits. Please refer to the HCPSS Student/Parent Handbook. In general, parents should contact the teacher and principal to discuss the purpose for the visit and to schedule a time. Parents should reach out 24 hours in advance.

Can my child be called out of class to the front office if I need to speak with him or her?

To limit interruptions to the classrooms, students will only be called out of class for emergencies.

If my child has a note for early dismissal, will he or she be waiting in the front office when I arrive?

To maximize instructional time and to limit distractions to the front office staff, students will be called out of class for an early dismissal when the parent arrives to school.

What supplies will my child need for school?

School supply lists for the following year are available in the office and they are posted on the NES website.

Can my child bring his or her cell phone to school?

Elementary school students are permitted to have personal communication devices in their backpacks during the school day. Phones must be turned off and out of sight during school hours. Students may use their personal communication devices before or after school hours. Students may use personal communication devices in the front office or classroom with the classroom teacher or administrator's permission, if needed.

I have a question, but it hasn't been addressed in this Handbook?

Ask your teacher or an administrator. We are very helpful!