



**RALPH R. SMITH  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

Melissa Lawson

Principal

16 Smith Court

Hyde Park, New York

12538

Telephone: 229-4060

***This agenda belongs to:***

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT NO. \_\_\_\_\_



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Printed on recyclable paper



## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Families,

Welcome to Ralph R. Smith Elementary School! It is our pleasure to welcome you and your child(ren) back to school. We are looking forward to providing many exciting and rewarding learning experiences throughout the school year.

This handbook contains valuable information about our programs and expectations. It has been carefully prepared in order to inform families of the policies and practices at Ralph R. Smith Elementary School.

Our school makes special efforts to create and promote a positive relationship between home and school. Parents are encouraged to contact the school if there is a question and/or concern. It is important to work together to help your child(ren) do their very best. I am sure that with your support, this school year will be a successful one!

Sincerely,

Melissa Lawson

## GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

School Hours: 9:15 am to 3:40 pm

Early Dismissal: 12:00 pm

Students are not permitted to enter the building until 9:15 am, as we do not have proper supervision for children until that time.

Students leave the building and board the buses at 3:40 pm. If you are picking up your child and they will not be riding the school bus, you must send in a note. Students must be picked up by 3:30 in order to make room for the buses.

### STUDENT SIGN-IN / SIGN-OUT

If your child arrives after 9:30, he/she **must** be signed in on the clipboard in the main office. Failure to do so may result in your child being marked absent for the day.

Anytime a student is picked up from school, a note should be sent in to your child's classroom teacher. The note should include the time of pick-up as well as the name of the adult picking your child up. That adult will be asked to show the office staff their photo identification and he or she must sign out the student being picked up on the clipboard in the main office.

We ask that you do not pick up your child early (before 3:30) unless it is absolutely necessary. Academic instruction is occurring until the very end of the day. If students are consistently picked up early, they will miss valuable instructional time.

### SIX-DAY CYCLE

All Hyde Park schools are on a six-day cycle rotation with days listed as A-F. This rotation allows equity of instruction and continuity of program. The letter day is posted on the District website and announced each day for student awareness.



### TELEPHONE



Our telephone number is 229-4060. Students' use of the phone will be limited to emergency calls only.

### VISITORS

Visitors are always welcome to our school. Visitors to our school must sign in at the main office, show photo identification, and receive a visitor pass. Visits with classroom teachers should be pre-scheduled with teachers.

### WEBSITES

The District website at [www.hydeparkschools.org](http://www.hydeparkschools.org) has a great deal of information, including the current day's lunch menu, the letter (A-F) day, calendar of school vacations, agendas for the Board of Education meetings, and links to individual school websites. Snow day closings are also posted on the site early in the morning, often before it is announced on the radio. Additionally, information specific to our school is on the Ralph R. Smith webpage: [www.hydeparkschools.org/RRS](http://www.hydeparkschools.org/RRS).

### CHILD CARE

Family Services offers before- and after-school child care in our district. For more information, contact Family Services at 452-1110, x3130.

### EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Sometimes due to weather or mechanical failure, it is necessary to dismiss students early. Your child will be sent to the location you have





including hats, gloves, and boots. When it is raining or extremely cold (20 degrees or below, including wind chill) the students will stay indoors for recess. If your child cannot participate in recess, please send a note from your child's doctor to our nurse.



## HEALTH EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS

Each student new to the District, as well as every student enrolled in grades kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> must have a recent health examination. A certificate signed by the family doctor must be provided to the school.

## MEDICATIONS

To have medication administered during the school day, the school nurse must receive written permission from your child's doctor. Medication must be delivered by the parent to the school nurse, and not sent on the school bus. The medication must be in its original container with a pharmacist's label. Over the counter medications cannot be administered in school by personnel.

## PHOTOGRAPHS



Throughout the school year, your child may be photographed for District produced publications or by the news media. If you do not wish your child to be photographed or videotaped, please let the principal know in writing.

## PROHIBITED ITEMS

Please note that some items should not be brought to school. Toys as well as electronic devices, such as cell phones, game systems and CD/MP3 players are easily lost or stolen, and **do not** belong in school. Trading cards or silly banz should not be brought to school for the same reason. Any item that your child would be devastated if it were lost, stolen or damaged should stay at home. If such items are brought to school, the classroom teacher or main office will hold them until the end of the day for safe keeping.

## LOST AND FOUND

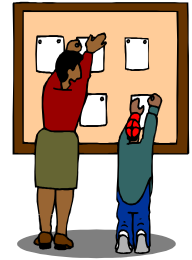
All clothing found on the school grounds, regardless of its value, is placed on the lost and found area in the lobby. Money, jewelry, and other articles of value are turned in to the office. Students may claim them after proper identification.

Common sense and consideration is the best guide in determining whether or not to bring personal possessions to school. The school administration and staff are not responsible for valuables that students bring to school. It is recommended that students leave all valuables at home.

All clothing should have the child's name on it. This includes hat, gloves, sweaters, coats, lunchboxes, knapsacks, and boots.

## PTA

The Ralph R. Smith PTA usually meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm. Please check the school website to verify meeting dates and times. All parents are encouraged to join. The PTA needs volunteers to help with the many activities that benefit our students.



## BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAM (BLT)

This is a group of staff, parents, and community members who work together to set and achieve goals for Ralph R. Smith. If you are interested in joining, please contact the principal.

## MEET THE STAFF

Parents are invited to school to meet their child's teacher and to learn about the program and expectations for the upcoming year. For the elementary schools, this date is usually during the first month of school. Please check the District website for the latest information.



## REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued four times a year – every 10 weeks. Please check the district calendar for the exact dates for report cards. All parents are required to conference with their child's teacher at the end of the first marking period to receive their child's report card. Conference days are also scheduled at the end of the third marking period for those who wish a conference at that time. Any time you have a question or concern about your child's progress, please schedule an appointment with the teacher.



## HOMEWORK

Homework is a teacher planned activity or assignment. It is considered part of the learning experience and is an extension of the classroom instruction.

Things to consider for a child to be successful with homework:

- ✓ Show an interest in the schoolwork sent home.
- ✓ Have a specific place to do homework. If possible, a child should do homework in the same place each day. The place should be uncluttered and quiet. Provide materials for homework such as pencils, paper, ruler, crayons, etc.
- ✓ Provide encouragement, motivation and prompting. It is best for a child to complete homework independently. The student needs practice in working and applying what has been learned in school. If your child has difficulty completing homework, please contact the teacher.
- ✓ A schedule should be set for completing homework. Determine a homework schedule that fits with your family's particular activities. It is beneficial to the child to have a consistent homework time.
- ✓ Set reasonable time expectations. If your child seems to be spending too much time each night on homework, contact the teacher.
- ✓ When it is time to go to bed, please stop your child, whether or not the homework is completed. Inform the teacher if this happens often and how much time has been spent on an assignment.



Types of homework could include:

- Reading stories
- Listening to and preparing reports on radio, TV or newspaper
- Researching on the internet
- Individualized assignments based on a student's needs and ability
- Written assignments: letters, stories, descriptions and poetry
- Creative and/or experimental projects
- Exploration – widening of horizons, searching for ideas and facts
- Independent drills and practices

If there is no written assignment, remember **READING** is an important and fundamental part of learning! Our goal is for homework to be a positive experience. If at any time it becomes a frustrating experience for you or your child, please contact the classroom teacher.

## SCIENCE FAIR



Our school holds a science fair each spring. Students are encouraged to design an experiment to answer a scientific question they have. Students are given the opportunity to explain their project to a judge. Our school is open in the evening for viewing of projects.

## CHILD STUDY TEAM (CST)

The CST is a group of faculty members who meet on a weekly basis to monitor the progress of students who might be experiencing some difficulties academically, socially and/or emotionally. Parents are notified by mail if their child is being discussed at a CST meeting and their presence is welcomed.

## STATE ASSESSMENTS

New York State gives assessments each spring in the areas of English Language Art (ELA) and Mathematics for students in grades 3, 4 and 5. In addition, 4<sup>th</sup> graders have a Science assessment. In the past, 5<sup>th</sup> graders have had a Social Studies assessment, but New York State has eliminated this test for the upcoming school year.



The 2011 dates for the New York State Assessments are:

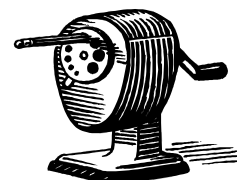
Grades 3-5 ELA    May 4-6

Grades 3-5 Math    May 11-13

Grade 4 Science    May 31-June 3, and June 6

## ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES

Students who score below certain benchmarks on the statewide assessments are eligible for Academic Intervention Services (AIS) in school. In addition, early inter-vention services are available for students in grades kindergarten through 2 in reading, writing, and mathematics. These services are provided by certified reading teachers and teaching assistants. Small group instruction is provided both in the classroom and in a separate location, depending on the needs of the students. If your child is determined to be eligible for AIS, you would be notified.



## EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

The District offers two options under this program:

S.O.A.R. – Student Opportunities Academic Resources provides students opportunities to reinforce academic skills and learning strategies.

I.M.A.G.E. – Inquiring Minds and Gifted Education provides some in depth study for high achieving students.

Both programs occur on Tuesday and Thursdays after school. Students who are selected for either of these programs are notified by mail.



## BAND

Students in grades four and five may choose to play a band instrument. These students receive one instrumental lesson per six-day cycle, and have one or two band rehearsals per cycle. The bands perform at two evening concerts during the year.



## ORCHESTRA

Students who are studying a string instrument are also part of the school orchestra. These students receive an instrumental lesson once per cycle, and have orchestra rehearsal as well. Selected students are invited to join the District Orchestra.



## CHORUS

Students in fourth and fifth grade may choose to participate in chorus in addition to their regular music class. Each chorus practices once per six-day cycle. These choruses perform at two evening concerts per year. In addition, all third grade students participate in the Third Grade Chorus that gives a concert for our school during the school day.



Ralph R. Smith

R espectful

R esponsible

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## CODE OF CONDUCT

### Plain Language Summary

Updated June, 2010

The Board of Education recognizes that a safe and orderly school environment is necessary for students and district personnel in order to provide a quality educational without disruption or interference. To achieve this environment, responsible behavior is required of all students, district personnel, parents and other visitors that is based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty, and integrity.

This document is intended to give students, parents, staff and visitors an overview of the expected behavior while on school property or attending school functions and the consequences when these expectations are not met. Expectations for acceptable conduct on school property or during participation in any school function are clearly described in the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Board of Education. Possible consequences of unacceptable conduct and the fair and prompt administration of discipline when necessary are also included in this document. Anyone interested in more information and specific details should obtain a copy of this document which is available on the district website [www.hydeparkschools.org](http://www.hydeparkschools.org), or from the office of any school, as well as central office.

The goal of the district is to assist students in learning self-discipline and to assume and accept responsibility for their own behavior, as well as the consequences of misbehavior. District personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on the students' ability to grow in self-discipline. The district expects all students to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner, with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, district personnel and other members of the school community, and for the care of school facilities and equipment. In summary, students may not engage in behavior that is disorderly, insubordinate, disruptive, violent or which endangers the safety, morals, health or welfare of others. In addition, students are expected to refrain from misconduct and from assisting another student in prohibited conduct.

All students are expected to promptly report violations of the Code of Conduct. Students may report to a teacher, guidance counselor, the building principal (or someone the principal designates) or any administrator in the building. Any student observing another student in danger of causing physical harm to oneself, other students or staff must immediately report it. Such physical harm can come

from a weapon, alcohol or illegal substances, as well as other sources.

When discipline must be imposed because of a breach of the Code of Conduct, it will be done promptly, fairly and in a lawful manner with the objective of most effectively improving behavior and self-discipline. If a staff member observes or receives a report of conduct that requires greater disciplinary measures than the staff member is authorized to impose, that staff member will report the behavior to her/his immediate supervisor. Determining the appropriate disciplinary action will consider the student's age, the nature of the offense, the circumstances which led to the offense, and the student's prior disciplinary record. Information from parents, teachers and/or others will be considered, as well as the context of the situation. As a general rule, discipline will increase in severity with each offense. Under no circumstances will corporal punishment or any act of physical force upon a student for the purpose of punishment, be used for discipline. However physical force for the purposes of protecting oneself or others, or for protecting school property, or for restraining or removing a disruptive or insubordinate student, may be used if other methods are not effective.

Discipline of students with disabilities will follow the procedural safeguards required by applicable laws and regulations. These students will have no greater or lesser rights than those expressly afforded by applicable federal and state law and regulations. A student identified as having a disability shall not be disciplined for behavior related to his or her disability. The Committee on Special Education will determine whether the behavior that violated the Code of Conduct is related to the disability.

Code of Conduct violations that are also a crime will be reported to the local police.

Anything that a student brings to school (or on a school bus) that is not allowed on school property will be confiscated and the parent or guardian will be notified. Confiscated material that is illegal will be reported to the local police.

Students who are found to have violated the district's Code of Conduct may be subject to an oral warning, written notification to parents, detention, removal from class, suspension (from attendance, transportation, athletic events, extra curricular events or social events), in-school suspension or loss of privileges. For more serious offenses, students may be suspended from school for up to five (5) days and for the most serious offenses, may be subject to a hearing and possible suspension from school for more than five (5) days. Except for verbal warnings, parents will be notified when discipline is imposed on a student. For all discipline other than verbal

warnings and lunch detention, the student and his or her parents are entitled to a formal or informal meeting with the staff member imposing the discipline. Refer to the complete Code of Conduct for those cases as well as a description of the staff members authorized to impose each type of discipline and the process to be followed.

A student who brings a weapon to school will be suspended. Students guilty of violence or who are habitually disruptive will be suspended for up to five days. Upon appeal, the superintendent of schools may change the suspension based on the student's age, grade, discipline record, input from parents, or extenuating circumstances, to a more effective form of discipline.

If a student under the age of 17 is habitually truant, ungovernable, or disobedient or otherwise demonstrates that he or she requires supervision or treatment, the district may file a PINS (person in need of supervision) petition in family court. The district may also file a PINS petition on students found to be in possession of marijuana and similar illegal substances. The superintendent is required to refer students who are under the age of 16 and bring a weapon to school to the county attorney for a juvenile delinquency proceeding before the family court.

Students may be questioned about alleged violations of the Code of Conduct without being informed of their rights or having their parents notified. They will be told by the staff member questioning them why they are being questioned. School lockers, desks and other assigned storage areas are school property and may be searched individually or collectively without warning and without notifying the student to whom the area was assigned. If particular evidence or contraband is being sought, the person to whom the area is assigned will be given an opportunity to admit that the item or item is in the area before it is searched. Such an admission will be considered when assigning discipline. Searches of such areas may be authorized by a school official if the official has credible reason to believe the search will reveal evidence or contraband.

Students are required to remove outerwear (coats, hats, etc.) if requested by a school official during a search or questioning. A student will only be required to remove other clothing if the search is authorized by the superintendent of schools or the school attorney. If a student is required to remove clothing other than outerwear in a search authorized by the superintendent of schools or the school attorney, the search will be conducted by a school district official of the same sex as the student and in the presence of another administrator, teacher or other school district professional who is also the same sex as the student. In an emergency situation in

which there is imminent danger to the school community where there is not another administrator, teacher, or other school district professional of the same sex as the student being searched, an opposite sex third party witness to the search may be used.

The police will not be involved in violations of the Code of Conduct that are not criminal. The police will be invited to enter school property if the school district believes a criminal act has occurred on school property. In addition, the police may enter school property or a school function to question or search a student, or to conduct a formal investigation involving students, only if they have a search or an arrest warrant or probable cause to believe a crime has been committed on school property or at a school function.

Before police officials are permitted to question or search a student, the building principal or someone designated by the building principal will try to notify the student's parent to give the parent the opportunity to be present during the questioning or search. The principal or designee will also be present during any police questioning or search of a student on school property or at a school function.

If the district has reason to believe a student has been abused, neglected or maltreated, the district will notify local child protective services and cooperate with them in conducting interviews of students. Such interviews may be conducted on school property and may include school officials. If the nature of the allegations is such that it may be necessary for the student to remove any of his or her clothing in order for the child protective services worker to verify the allegations, the school nurse or other district medical personnel will be present during that portion of the interview. No student will be required to remove his or her clothing in front of an official of the opposite sex or in the presence of fewer than two interviewees.

The district is committed to safeguarding the rights given all students under state and federal law while promoting a safe, healthy, orderly and civil school environment. All district students have the right to participate equally in all district activities. Students have the right to present their version of events relevant to disciplinary procedures. Students can receive a copy of school rules at any time. Students have the right to an explanation of the rules. Along with these rights, all students have a responsibility to know and follow the rules, treat district staff and their fellow students civilly and respectfully and work to the best of their ability.