



SACHEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

We Are Sachem

Hiawatha Elementary School PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK



97 Patchogue-Holbrook Road, Lake Ronkonkoma, NY 11779

(631) 471-1830

Principal: Mr. Joe Watson

Jwatson@sachem.edu

[Sachem Code of Character](#)

(click on link above to see BOE Policy 5300)

The Sachem Central School District Board of Education ("Board") is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment where all individuals are treated with respect so students and school district personnel may engage in quality educational services without disruption or interference. Responsible behavior by students, teachers, other school district personnel, parents, and other visitors is essential to achieving this goal.

HIAWATHA PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

PTA President: Gina Jansen

Hiawatha's active PTA contributes to the success of the school in many ways. Through PTA programs such as Book Fairs, School Pictures, Holiday Boutiques, Plant Sale, etc., our various cultural arts programs are sponsored. From the profits of these fundraisers, the PTA is able to purchase many "extras" that make our school a nicer place for all who attend.

HIAWATHA INFORMATION

Hiawatha's school day begins at 8:50 a.m. and ends at 3:20 p.m. Supervision will not be provided for students who loiter on school grounds when school is not in session.

ARRIVAL

- Children may not be dropped off at school before 8:35 a.m.
- Bus: If you are planning to use district transportation, your child's bus stop pick up time will be provided to you by the transportation department.
- Walkers:
 - All walkers should be supervised by a parent or guardian at the flag pole until the grade of the student has been called.
 - To ensure the safety of the students, only staff and students may go beyond the designated drop-off locations.
- If your child arrives after 8:50 a.m., you **must** come into the building with your child to sign him/her in.

DISMISSAL

- Bus: Buses will leave Hiawatha Elementary School between approximately 3:25 p.m.
- Walkers:
 - All walkers will be dismissed by the classroom teacher at the flag pole. All students must cross at the cross walk.
 - Leave the area immediately once you have your children. Please do not congregate on school property. When heading to your cars, do not cut through the buses and that you safely leave school grounds.
- Please make every effort to keep your child's transportation arrangements as consistent as possible and not change your child's transportation at the last minute.
- Students cannot be released to anyone but their legal parent/guardian or persons listed on their emergency contact card unless we have *written documentation from the parent/guardian stating the full name of the person given permission.

- *Notes to the teacher and/or principal giving permission for a change to dismissal should include child's full name, full name of person picking up student, date of pick up and full name of parent signing note and is needed for the following situations:
 - A change of after care schedule
 - Your child is remaining after school for an activity
 - Children riding bicycles (with bicycle helmet) to school rather than riding bus or walking. The school cannot be responsible for any lost or damaged bicycles. All bicycles should be locked when parked in the racks.
- Early dismissal: Parents should send a *note with the child stating the date and time of pick up so the teacher can have him/her ready. Children will not be called down until the parent is in the building. **To ensure your child's safety, we cannot make changes to your child's dismissal after 3:05 p.m. unless it is an emergency.**
- *Please send a **written note** as opposed to an email for these purposes as teachers are unable to regularly access their email throughout the school day.
- If the change of dismissal plan happens during the school day, please call the main office as the teacher is not able to regularly check email throughout the school day.

WALKER SAFETY

Students should make it a habit to:

- Walk on the left facing traffic.
- Look right and left before crossing streets.
- Cross at the street corners and never between parked cars.
- Never accept rides from strangers.
- Go directly home after school.
- Plan the safest, most direct route home.
- Walkers should arrive at school no more than 10 minutes before the start of the school day.
- Walkers must line up in an orderly fashion, not blocking the front doors.
- Parents of students fighting, running around, or otherwise endangering the safety of others will be called.

BICYCLE SAFETY

(See BOE Policy [5453](#))

Students are permitted to ride bicycles to school. Bicycles must be parked and locked in the designated rack areas. While on school grounds, all bicycle riders should ride with caution and abide by all rules associated with New York State traffic and safety laws. Any student found to be endangering the safety of himself/herself or others while riding a bicycle on school grounds will have his/her bicycle privileges denied.

*In New York State, all bicyclists under the age of 14 years old are required to wear safety certified bicycle helmets when they are operators or passengers on bicycles (Sec. 1238(5)).

BUS SAFETY

(See BOE Policy [5320](#))

Riding the school bus is a privilege. Any student who does not observe the Bus Rules for Students may be denied the privilege of riding the bus for a period of time. Questions or concerns about bus transportation should be directed to the Transportation Office at 631-471-1380.

Bus Rules for Students

- Students should be orderly and reasonably quiet on the bus and at the bus stops.
- Students are to be ready when the bus arrives.
- Students should not linger as they cross in front of a bus to board or exit.

- Students are to sit down as soon as they board the bus and remain in their seats while the bus is in motion.
- Students are to obey the bus driver's instructions, and respect the bus driver's rules.
- Students will be courteous to fellow bus riders and never push or shove when getting on or off the bus.
- Students are not allowed to lean out of, or put their heads or arms out of, the school bus window.
- After leaving a stopped school bus, students are to cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus in full view of the bus driver. DO NOT CROSS BEHIND THE BUS.
- Students exiting the morning buses are expected to walk and enter the school building immediately and are not permitted to linger outside the building.
- Students are not allowed to eat or chew gum on the bus.
- Students may be assigned a seat on the bus when deemed necessary by the principal, principal's aide or driver.
- Cell phones should not be used on the bus at any time for any reason.

Reasons for Disciplinary Actions on Bus:

- Refusing to obey driver
- Throwing objects
- Screaming/shouting
- Destruction of bus equipment
- Fighting/hitting other students
- Using obscene language
- Putting head or hands out window
- Littering from/on the bus

Bus Discipline Protocol

- First Report: The driver shall report the incident in writing. Names and violations are given on the report that is turned in to the Principal. The Principal or Principal's Aide will discuss the incident with the children involved and the parents.
- Second Report: Should a second incident with the same child occur, the driver will forward a written report to the building principal. Actions to prevent further incidents may be taken at this time (moving/assigning seats, etc.). The Principal or Principal's Aide will notify the parents of any disciplinary actions.
- More than two reports: Each report after the initial two may result in one or more days of bus suspension.

****Note: A serious infraction may result in immediate suspension from the bus with no warning letter of possible loss of transportation privileges. This would occur if, in the opinion of school officials, an immediate suspension is necessary to ensure the safety of all the children.****

SCHOOL NURSE

(https://www.sachem.edu/departments/health_services)

Mrs. Katie Nicosia, R.N.

cnicosia@sachem.edu

The nurse is available for any health issues that occur during the school day. If your child develops a health problem or goes on medication during the year, please notify the nurse's office. Also notify the nurse of any health information about your child (such as recent surgery or injury, new medical diagnoses, allergies, side effects of medication they are currently taking, etc.). At no time should your child be sent to school with medication, an adult must bring medication to school. If your child must take medication during the day, the school nurse must receive a doctor's order with instructions for dispensing (including Tylenol, throat lozenges, etc.). Please make sure that injuries which occur at home (minor cuts, bites, burns, etc.) are taken care of before school.

Personal hygiene is important. Please help your child take pride in their personal hygiene.

The **Emergency Information Card** requires three contacts to assume care of your child if you cannot be reached. Be sure persons listed are aware of their responsibilities and will be able to pick up your child during school hours. ***If there are any phone number changes, please notify the nurse, main office and update this information in the eSchool Parent Portal.***

Medical Information:

- Illness/Injuries:
 - If you know your child will be absent, please call the nurse's office. Voicemail is available 24 hours a day, so you can call at any time and leave a message.
 - Please send an absent note or doctor's note if your child has seen the MD, with your child on the day he/she returns to school.
- Do not send your child to school if he or she:
 - Has vomiting and/or has diarrhea within the last 24 hours or is nauseous.
 - Has a fever above 100.0 taken by mouth or chills. The child should remain home until they are fever free for 24 hours without any fever reducing medication. Please do not medicate a fever prior to school, when the medication wears off, the fever may return and you will be called to come pick up your child.
 - Has a pink/reddened eye, and/or discharge from the eye
 - Has a sore throat or strep throat. A student with strep should be on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.
 - Has a severe headache or ear pain
 - Has large amounts of mucous (liquid, drainage) from nose, or new onset congestion
 - Has a rash or honey crusted/open sores anywhere on the body
 - If you find your child is frequently asking to stay home from school or appears anxious about school, and there does not appear to be any physical symptoms, contact the nurse or your healthcare provider to discuss your concerns.
- If your child has been restricted from activities due to illness, surgery or injury, a physician's note is required to excuse them from Physical Education. The note should include the diagnosis, length of time restriction is in effect, and specify the use of crutches, wheelchair, walking boot etc. if applicable. ***Please note, Physical Education restrictions apply to outdoor recess as well.***
- Food allergies: There are an increasing number of children with food allergies. There are food allergy guidelines in place to ensure all students are safe while in school. This includes an allergy table in the cafeteria. If a classroom has a student with a severe food allergy, that classroom will be deemed allergen free. A letter will be sent home requesting that certain foods not be eaten in that classroom. Please refrain from sending those items into school for snack. If your child has food allergies, please be sure the school nurse is aware so an emergency plan can be developed for your child while at school.
- Medication: If your child requires medication while at school, there must be a written order from a physician, and written permission from the parent on file in the health office.
 - The medication must be brought into school by a parent/guardian, or other responsible adult. ***Students may not carry medication to/from school.***
 - The medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's name, drug dosage, and time to be administered. This includes any over the counter medications such as Tylenol, Motrin, cold/cough medication, etc.
 - ***Teachers are not permitted to hold or administer medication to students, and students are prohibited from carrying medication or administering it to themselves.***
- Immunizations: Kindergarten students entering school must have physician provided proof of the following immunizations at the time of registration and prior to the school year starting in September or they will be excluded:

- 3 or 4 polio* (with one given after the age of 4 yrs)
- 4 or 5 DTaP* (with one given after the age of 4 yrs)
- 2 MMR
- 2 varicella
- 3 Hepatitis B
- Fifth graders are required to provide proof of Tdap booster when they turn 11 years old. Students will not be permitted to start sixth grade without proof of this vaccine.
- **Physicals:**
 - NYS Physical examinations are required/mandated for all new students entering any grade.
 - In addition, they are also required/mandated for students entering Kindergarten, first, third, and fifth grades.
 - Please send in a copy of this physical to the nurse as soon as possible at the beginning of the school year. If your child does not receive a physical from their own physician, he/she will be scheduled for an examination by the school's physician.
- **Screenings:**
 - **Hearing/Vision:**
 - NY State Education Law requires students receive vision/hearing screenings. The purpose of this requirement is to detect the presence of vision/hearing problems likely to impede a student's learning. If the results of the screening indicates that your child requires further follow up, you will receive written notification from the nurses office.
 - The screenings done on each grade level are as follows:
 - Kindergarten: near/distance vision, color perception, hearing
 - First grade: near/distance vision, hearing
 - Second grade: none
 - Third grade: near/distance vision, hearing
 - Fourth grade: none
 - Fifth grade: near/distance vision, hearing
 - New entrants: near/distance vision, color perception, hearing
 - **Scoliosis:** State law requires that girls in grades 5 and 7, and boys in grade 9, be examined for scoliosis (lateral curvature of the spine). The screening will be conducted by the nurse during your child's physical education class. You may elect to have your own physician do the screening, but the school will need documentation from your doctor of the results or your child will be screened.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

(See BOE Policy [5100](#))

The Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success.

Students who develop a pattern of absences/tardiness shall have their parents/guardians contacted, shall be reminded of the attendance policy, and will be told that the students are subject to the school disciplinary policy. The school administration shall send written notification to the student's parents/guardians expressing concern about the impact of excessive absences or tardiness on the student's education. The district will share this policy with local Child Protective Services (CPS) to ensure a common understanding of excused and unexcused ATEDs (unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures) and to work toward identifying and addressing cases of educational neglect.

Punctuality and good attendance are important to your child's success in school. Parents should make every effort to have their children in school on time every day. Tardiness is disruptive to the classroom and has an adverse effect on a child's educational progress. New York State attendance laws require a written excuse each time a student is tardy or absent from school.

- Lateness to school: Regulations require a note by a parent for a student's lateness to school. Students arriving late must be escorted into the building and must sign the child into school with the hallway monitor in the security vestibule. **Anytime after 8:50 a.m. will be considered tardy.**
- Phone call when a child is absent: The parent/guardian should contact the main office.
- Returning to school after an absence: Students must bring a written excuse signed by a parent/guardian to his or her classroom teacher. If a child is absent for more than five days, a doctor's note is required.

SACHEM FOOD SERVICES - CAFETERIA

https://www.sachem.edu/departments/Food_Services

Complete lunches, including milk and dessert, are served daily. Monthly menus are online to inform parents of the lunch choices each day. Children may bring their own lunch and purchase milk and/or snacks separately.

CAFETERIA/LUNCH PROCEDURES

- Students will receive 25 minutes for lunch
- Student Right: I have the right to enjoy my meal in a clean and well-mannered environment.
- Student Responsibilities:
 - It is my responsibility to eat my food quietly and neatly using proper table manners so that others may enjoy their meal.
 - I will listen to directions given by adults when I am buying lunch, milk or snacks.
 - I will never throw food or other objects.
 - I will always walk in the cafeteria.
 - I will notify a teacher when leaving the cafeteria.
 - Before leaving the cafeteria, I will be sure to clean up my area and throw away all my trash.

SUPPORT SERVICES

https://www.sachem.edu/departments/student_services

Our support service personnel includes a school psychologist, a social worker, speech/language therapists, resource room teacher, remedial math and remedial reading teachers and an ENL teacher. In addition, an adaptive physical education teacher, occupational therapist, physical therapist, and specialists of the hearing and visually impaired are also available for our students who require their services.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS, DELAYED OPENING AND EARLY DISMISSAL

Emergency school closings, delayed openings and early dismissals will be communicated via School Messenger. This system utilizes the information parents enter into the parent portal for contact purposes.

Please note that in the case of a 2-hour delayed opening, students should be at bus stops 2 hours from their regular pick up time and students will be able to enter the building at 10:40 a.m. School will start at 10:50 a.m.

In the event of an emergency early dismissal, the early dismissal time is determined by the school district. All students will be placed on their assigned school bus even if they do not typically use bus transportation, and **aftercare will be canceled**. All parents should have an alternate plan in place in case of early school closings. Children should know this plan in advance.

ESCHOOL PARENT PORTAL

Please be sure to access the eSchool Parent Portal for each of your school age students and keep it updated with current contact information as this is contact information the building/district will use to contact you.

SCHOOL MESSENGER

School Messenger is utilized as Sachem's emergency contact system. Parents will receive automated calls/emails through this system in the case of an emergency and/or special events/updates. The School Messenger system utilizes the email addresses and phone numbers on the Parent Portal, so please be sure your contact information is up to date.

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

Successful students:

- Bring to class notebook, paper, pen or pencil and other materials necessary.
- Are active participants in the classroom, listen well, and take part in discussions.
- Plan their work and schedule a time for homework each day. Homework assignments should be written down in class, questions asked if the assignment is unclear, and necessary materials gathered to be brought home.
- Strive to do their best, not just get by.
- Get an adequate amount of sleep each night.
- Are taken for eye or doctor's examination (if recommended by the school nurse).

HIAWATHA RULES AND REGULATIONS

- Children will not be permitted back into the building after school hours to pick up any items left in school, including homework. Students must leave school grounds upon dismissal. For safety reasons, an adult must accompany students on grounds after school hours or on weekends.
- Any forgotten item, such as lunch, musical instrument, sneakers, etc., must be dropped off at the vestibule with the Hallway Monitor.
- Visitors to the school shall be governed by the following rules:
 - For security purposes all visitors must enter through the main vestibule, sign in, and receive a pass.
 - State-issued identification is required to pick up your child or access the building.
 - No one is to go directly to a classroom.
- Communication with your child's teacher:
 - Messages: It typically is not possible for teachers to receive a telephone call during the school day. Parents who have a concern of an immediate nature should leave their telephone number with the main office and the teacher will return the call as soon as possible. You can also email the teacher directly (please know that teachers are usually not able to be on their computers while providing instruction for our students). If it is an emergency regarding something that must be addressed immediately, please call the Main Office and share that information.
 - Change to child's dismissal: If your child needs to utilize a different dismissal procedure, please write a note to their teacher and send it in that morning. If there is an emergency and changes must be made during the day, please call the Main Office to inform the building.
- Lost and Found:
 - Found articles are placed in the "Lost and Found" area in the lobby. Each trimester, lost items will be displayed in the cafeteria. Unclaimed items will be donated/disposed of.
 - **Please place your child's name on all belongings including coats, sweatshirts, water bottles, etc.**
- Students should enter and exit the building in a quiet and orderly manner.
- Students have a responsibility to be prompt at all times.
- Students are to observe the following routines when moving throughout the hallways:
 - Walk quietly at all times, because other classes are at work.
 - Keep to the right side of the hallway and listen to the adult in charge.
 - Talk quietly or not at all.

- Respect classes in session.
- Keep hands off the walls, bulletin boards, displays and keep them to yourself.
- **Student Dress Code:** Please see Board Policies, Code of Character, VII. Student Dress Code
- No gum chewing in school, on school grounds, or on the bus.
- No student should enter a room without adult supervision.
- School books must be cared for. Students will be required to pay for any lost or damaged book.
- **Playground:** For the safety of the children, pets are not permitted on school property during school hours. All children are expected to respect school property. **Sneakers only on the playground.**
- **Bathrooms:** These facilities should be kept neat and clean. A child caught defacing the bathroom will be immediately sent to the Principal/Principal's Aide and the Principal/Principal's Aide will decide the consequences. Students should utilize indoor voices, appropriate language and use of the facilities. Students may not congregate in the bathroom or wait for a friend to be finished. Once you have finished using the bathroom you must rejoin your class where they are currently located.
- **Birthdays:**
 - Please inform your child's teacher if you wish to send in a birthday treat.
 - Store bought and pre-wrapped food items only.
 - No freezer/refrigerator products, balloons or flowers.
 - Party invitations are not to be distributed in the classrooms unless the entire class is being invited.
- **Outside Lunch:**
 - For lunch purposes, outside lunches from fast food restaurants should not be dropped off at school for your child.
 - When bringing in food for a classroom activity/celebration, please note:
 - We do not accept items made at home.
 - All items must be sent with a list of ingredients for allergy purposes.
 - Individually wrapped and prepackaged items are preferred.
- **Phone Calls:**
 - If you need to communicate with your child(ren) in the event of an emergency, please call the office staff and they will gladly convey the message. Students will not be called out of class for a phone call or a forgotten item to avoid a disruption of instruction.
 - Children are permitted to utilize the office telephones to call home in the case of an emergency, permission to attend an event, confirm dismissal plans or to request necessary materials.
 - **Cell phone usage is not permitted in school.**
- **Parent/Teacher Conferences:** District-wide conference days are held each year ([Sachem CSD Calendar](#)).
- **Homework:** Homework provides excellent opportunities for developing good study habits, providing for individual differences and abilities, and encouraging self-initiative on the part of the student. Parents can assist their child(ren) with homework by:
 - Asking questions about the content of student homework.
 - Giving requested assistance, but allowing the student to do his or her work.
- **Physical Education:** District policy requires students to wear sneakers (without heels or platforms or slip-ons) which can be made secure with laces or velcro straps. All jewelry including earrings, bracelets, rings, necklaces, watches, etc. may not be worn. When children are not able to remove earrings due to inability or because the hole is new, post earrings may be worn for a limited time as long as they are covered with a band aid or medical tape. Please provide the tape to cover the earrings at home before school. Students can remove the tape after the completion of their physical education class.
- **Playground Rules** (For safety reasons, failure to follow recess guidelines may result in loss of privileges.):
 - No physical contact (pushing, shoving, contact games...).
 - No abusive or foul language.
 - **Sneakers only on the playground.**
 - Running and tag games are not permitted in the playground area.
 - Take turns using the equipment.

- Climbing is permitted on ladders, steps and landings only.
 - Jumping off equipment is prohibited.
 - Respect other's space.
 - Use of baseball bats, lacrosse sticks and hockey sticks are not permitted during lunch/recess at school.
 - Personal Items: Students should refrain from bringing personal items (trading cards, electronic devices, collectibles, etc) to school. The school is not responsible for the loss of these items.
 - Use of Social Media/Electronic Devices: Students engaging in mean spirited or inappropriate interactions outside of school that cause a disruption in the educational process during school may be subject to discipline at school. This would fall under a DASA complaint and the school is responsible to follow up.
 - Weapons and Dangerous Devices (See BOE Policy 5312.2): Any item perceived to be a weapon is expressly forbidden on school grounds. According to our Code of Conduct, the administration reserves the right to discipline a child disobeying this important policy.
- **Appropriate action will be taken by the Principal when a student is repeatedly and/or substantially disruptive to the educational process. Possible consequences could be a phone call home; letter sent home, in-school detention, or an out-of-school suspension.****

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
(See BOE Policy [5300](#))