

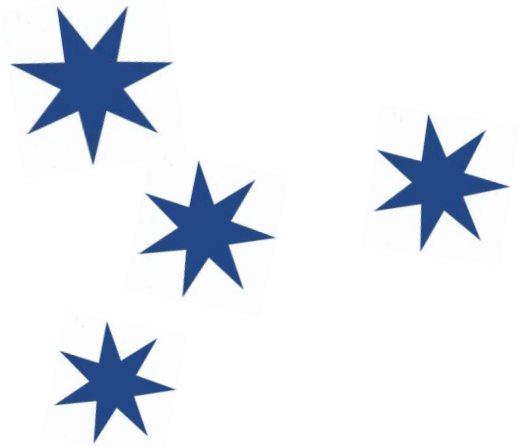
2021-2022
MILLS POND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



STUDENT/PARENT
HANDBOOK

Principal—Ireen Westrack

Mills Pond Students



Reach for the Stars

**SMITHTOWN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
MILLS POND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
246 Moriches Road, St. James, NY 11780
(631) 382-4305, FAX (631) 382-4304**

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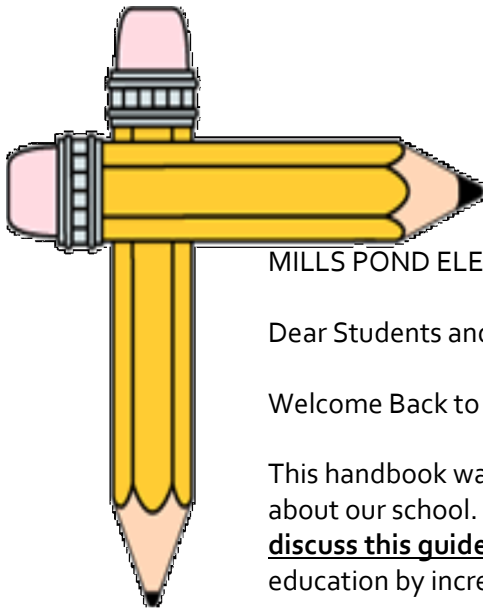
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Challenge
leads to the greatest learning!



CHALLENGE
CHALLENGE



MILLS POND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome Back to School!

This handbook was designed to answer questions that you might have about our school. **It is important for students and parents to read and discuss this guide together.** Our goal is to foster a partnership in education by increasing communication between home and school.

Our Shared Decision Team, who created this handbook, worked cooperatively to address all of your needs. Therefore, you will find this handbook to be a useful tool to access information and to answer many of your questions. When you have a question about school, before picking up the telephone, you can check this handbook for the answer. As a means for students to be successful in school, they should read this handbook to review school regulations. Our school staff believes in cultivating self-motivated students who continually perform to their fullest potentials.

Please keep your handbook in an accessible place. You will find it useful for the remainder of the school year. You will receive a revised copy at the beginning of each school year.

More information about our school and district is available on the district web site at <http://www.smithtown.k12.ny.us>

Sincerely,
Ireen Westrack
Principal

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Our entire school population
recites this oath together
daily via the PA system.



Mills Pond Oath

I promise to be an honest,
hard-working student,
To obey our school rules,
To respect people and property,
To take pride in our school,
To be a role model for fellow students,
And to be a good citizen at all times.

DATES AND HOURS/ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

The official hours for the school day are **9:30 a.m. – 3:35 p.m.** Children may begin to enter the building at **9:20 a.m.** **Children who arrive after 9:30 a.m. should enter through the front doors and report to the Greeter. It is important that students arrive on time for the start of instruction. When students arrive late, not only do they miss important information regarding instruction and plans for the day, it is also disruptive to the teacher and students, causing a loss of instructional time for everyone.**

All children, whether they ride the bus, walk, or are brought to school, are not to arrive prior to the times stated above and **must not linger past the stated dismissal time.** For the safety of the children, our doors will be locked from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Our greeter will be on duty from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. At 4:00, the front doors will remain locked until 6 p.m. when the After Care Program ends. After 4:00, if you must enter the building to pick up your child from the After Care Program, please use the doors at the side of the building nearest our cafeteria. If you are entering the building from the front doors for any other reason, you must ring the bell and one of our custodians will open the door. There is **no adult supervision** before or after school hours.

UPK Students: This year, Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) will be in our building. These **UPK students will arrive between 9:55 and 10:05. Dismissal for our UPK students will take place from 2:45-3:00.** UPK parents will have a sign on their dashboard and park their vehicle while they drop off and pick up their children at our kindergarten entrance. If you are an MPE parent driving your child and you arrive during these times, please be courteous and allow the UPK parent the right of way for drop off and pick up.

Parents requiring before and after school care may arrange for this through the **Smithtown Parent Resource Center (360-7517).** Unless children are participating in an activity under a teacher's supervision or are registered in the Morning Care Program, they should not arrive at school prior to **9:20 a.m.** Parents who drop children off at school early will be called and asked to come and pick up their child until the designated arrival time. Your cooperation in

helping us provide a safe and supervised environment is greatly appreciated.

Children may not be signed out for early dismissal after **3:10 p.m.** because it interferes with dismissal procedures. A written note to the teacher is the appropriate way to notify the school that a child will be picked up early. The teacher will then forward the note to the health office. **Please understand that the last 25 minutes of instruction is critical for giving closure to the day's activities.**

Parents are advised that verbal or telephone requests to alter the normal dismissal procedures cannot be granted except in emergency situations. Please do not call the school to request such changes except for emergencies.

VISITOR GUIDELINES

Our school doors are locked from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. except during student arrival time. If you need to visit our school at any time between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., please understand that in the interest of safety the following procedures are necessary:

1. Never leave a vehicle running, keys in your vehicle, children or pets in the vehicle
2. Park only in designated parking spaces and have your photo ID available
3. Ring the doorbell
4. State your first and last name
5. State your purpose for visiting MPE
6. Please be patient while the greeter checks with staff
7. After entering the building, sign-in at the greeter's desk
8. Wear your name tag while in school
9. Only visit the specific area you are designating as the "reason for your visit"
10. Sign out when you leave the building

NOTE: Our greeter leaves at 4:00. Parents picking up After Care students should walk to the cafeteria doors for entrance. All other clubs and groups using our school are required to assign a person to assist with the front door entries.

AUTHORIZATION FOR STUDENT RELEASE

A student can only be released to parents, legal guardians, or persons who have been authorized by the parent or legal guardian to assume responsibility for the student. If a designated person is under the age of 18 and is taking a student from school in a vehicle, that designated person must produce a valid **Senior Driver's License**.

Students will be released to either parent unless a court order or decree indicates otherwise. The school must be given a copy of any such court order or decree. Your child will not be released to anyone whose name does not appear on the **Emergency Information section of the Parent Portal**. Written permission from the parent is required for student release. **In addition, the person picking up your child must present photo ID.**

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES (Non-bus)

Parents picking up children at dismissal **must show photo ID to sign out children**. Pick-up is at the kindergarten entrance. Once you have signed your child out of school please do not linger on school grounds. For safety purposes, children should not be playing in the front of our building during student dismissal.

SCHOOL BUS REGULATIONS

The following directions explain what is expected of each student related to behavior on the school buses. This is reinforced at school on a regular basis. Please reinforce expected school bus conduct at home. Failure to comply with the following directions can result in the suspension of a child's bus privileges.

- ◆ All students on a school bus are under the authority of its driver and are required to follow the driver's instructions.
- ◆ Order must be maintained within the bus at all times so that the driver is not distracted from his or her primary duty of safely operating the bus.
- ◆ Students approaching the bus from the opposite side of the road are not to cross the road until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver

signals them, at which time they are to immediately cross in front of the bus.

- ◆ Musical instruments must be stored under the bus seat if possible.
- ◆ Students should place their backpack on their laps.
- ◆ Students are to sit down quickly and to remain in that seat until the bus has come to a complete stop and it is time to disembark.
- ◆ Saving seats is not permitted.
- ◆ Students should keep themselves and their belongings inside the bus at all times.
- ◆ Objects are not to be thrown **on, from, or at** the bus.
- ◆ Students are to help keep the bus clean and free of any damage.
- ◆ Students are expected to be reasonably quiet and courteous at all times.
- ◆ Students should not be consuming any food or beverages while riding to and from school.

TRANSPORTATION

- ◆ Problems or questions concerning school busing should be directed to the school office at 382-4305 or directly to the Transportation Office at 382-4100.
- ◆ Bicycle Riders (grades 4 and 5 only) – A note must be sent to school giving your child permission to ride a bike to and from school. This note must be in ink, dated and signed by the parent or legal guardian. Parents are advised that NYS Law requires all students to wear helmets when riding their bikes. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that children wear helmets when riding bicycles. In the interest of safety, if a member of our staff observes that a student rides a bike to school without a helmet, this student will not be permitted to ride the bike home from school. Students should also have a lock to secure their bicycle in the bike rack.
- ◆ **Bus passes will be issued for child care purposes ONLY. In the event an emergency exists and a bus pass is requested, please be certain to send in all pertinent information, including the full names of all children involved. The bus number and bus stop requested are also appreciated. If a change in bus is due to a childcare issue, please contact**

transportation for a **"Baby Sitter Stop Request"** form. We cannot issue bus passes to students for brownies/boy scout troops or for play dates.

- ◆ All children are assigned to a bus route. If you would like your child to be considered as a walker for the school year, please submit a note stating your request and send it to the health office at the beginning of the year.

IDENTIFICATION TAGS – KINDERGARTEN & FIRST GRADE ONLY

- ◆ Identification tags will be given out on "School Drop Off Day" and should be worn by youngsters who are entering Kindergarten and First Grade. Please continue to have your child wear his/her tag for the first week or two of school.
- ◆ Parents should print either their child's bus number and bus stop location, or "walker," or "car transportation" on the tags.

EMERGENCY CLOSING, LATE ARRIVAL

It is important that all parents understand our school's procedures for advising you of school closings and/or early dismissal due to inclement weather conditions or other emergency conditions.

EARLY DISMISSAL/LATE ARRIVAL

School Messenger calls will be made case severe weather conditions arise.

If schools are closed or there is a delayed arrival because of bad weather, **a School Messenger call will be made by the District Office.** Announcements will also be made over the local radio stations between 7:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. It is of utmost importance that parents have the Parent Portal information (phone numbers and emergency contacts) current. Parents are also advised to review an alternative plan with their child in the event that proper adult supervision is unavailable at home for an emergency dismissal. Parents are advised to review this on the mornings when inclement weather is predicted and an early dismissal might occur. Any anticipated change in the usual dismissal procedure should be sent to the teacher in writing. This is particularly important if a child is to go home with another parent or if there is a change to their usual routine.

Parents are also advised to listen to the local radio stations for announcements of

early school closings. This is recommended instead of calling the school and tying up the telephone lines.

ATTENDANCE

- ◆ Parents are asked to call the **Health Office (382-4306)** before the start of the school day to report an absence. If a call is not received, the attendance clerk will call the home to verify the absence. This is done for the safety of each child. Please call the Health Office as early as possible to report your child's absence.
- ◆ A child returning to school after an absence must bring a written note signed by the parent stating the dates of and reason for the absence. Tardiness should be handled in the same manner.
- ◆ A child arriving after the official school day begins must be accompanied by a parent to the greeter's desk to sign in the child. **Children must NOT go directly to their classroom.**
- ◆ **As per the N Y State Education Department, all teachers are required to take period by period attendance.**

YEARLY HEALTH SURVEY

Parents are urged to update the Yearly Health Survey via the Parent Portal as soon as possible. The information listed is used to contact parents in the event of an emergency. **If there are no changes, you must click the SUBMIT button on the bottom of the page in order to activate the information.** If the information listed has to be revised during the school year, you can access the Parent Portal and update the changes. Please remember to click the SUBMIT button.

HEALTH OFFICE POLICIES/ILLNESS

You will receive a separate Health Office Booklet in the beginning of the school year. Please refer to it for further information on policies and illnesses. Please keep our school nurse, Mrs. Murphy, informed of any health concerns that may arise during the year. Her telephone number is 382-4307.

SCHOOL LUNCH

- ◆ Parents are encouraged to open a lunch account on the district web site allowing students to charge their lunch. If you choose not to open an account, please limit the amount of money brought to school.
- ◆ The price of a “paid in full” elementary school lunch is **\$2.75**. The price of milk is **\$.60** for white, chocolate or skim. There is a “Meal Charging” program in effect. Parents may write a check payable to the **Child Nutrition Program** in any desired amount over \$5.00. If you wish to pay exact amounts, the cost of lunch for **10** meals is **\$27.50**, **\$55.00 for 20**.
- ◆ In order to meet Federal and State regulations with regard to Dietary Guidelines, children may no longer purchase just one “a la carte” item (such as pizza or hamburger). Students must choose food items from at least three of the five food groups in order to buy lunch. Further questions about this should be directed to ***Jeannette Frabizio, Director of the School Lunch Program, at 382-5505***.

CARING CAFETERIA BEHAVIOR

We want every student to enjoy lunch. Here is your appropriate Caring Cafeteria Behavior Checklist:

- ◆ Walk quietly to and from the cafeteria
- ◆ Remain at the table with your class
- ◆ Use indoor voices and be respectful to other students and staff
- ◆ Always walk quietly while in the cafeteria
- ◆ Clean up when you have finished your lunch

SPECIAL RULES FOR THE CAFETERIA

- ◆ Be sure to remember your money and lunch before leaving your classroom.
- ◆ Stop talking and listen when you are signaled to do so.
- ◆ Eat your lunch before buying a snack.
- ◆ **Open containers or bags of snacks should not be taken from the cafeteria.**
- ◆ Tables and floor are to be left neat and clean. Any food left on trays is to be put in the garbage pails when your table is called. Trays are to be stacked neatly.

PLAYGROUND SAFETY RULES

- ◆ One person should be on the slide at a time.
- ◆ Go down the slide feet first only.
- ◆ Never walk back up the slide.
- ◆ Do not let go of a bar until your feet are on the ground.
- ◆ Never touch a person on a bar.
- ◆ Do not walk on top of parallel bars.
- ◆ Only one person should be on the bars or slide at a time.
- ◆ Keep your fingers out of chain links.
- ◆ When jumping off a platform or piece of equipment, land feet first only.
- ◆ Do not crawl on or jump off top beams.
- ◆ Benches are for sitting only.
- ◆ Do not wear loose clothing, cords around neck or carry objects in hand when playing on playground.
- ◆ Do not run while playing around playground equipment.
- ◆ Use the equipment only for the purpose it is intended.
- ◆ Do not stand in the way of someone who is swinging on a piece of apparatus.
- ◆ Take turns when waiting to use a specific piece of equipment.
- ◆ Do not throw sand, gravel or wood chips.
- ◆ Share the playground equipment.
- ◆ Tell an adult immediately if someone is hurt.
- ◆ Consider the safety of yourself and others at all times.
- ◆ Students will not be permitted on the playground equipment if they are wearing the following footwear: **platform sneakers, slip-on sneakers, roller sneakers, high heels, flip flops, ballet slippers, or any backless sandal.**
- ◆ **Hockey sticks, hockey equipment, and footballs** cannot be brought to school.

SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY

We have initiated a successful security system for our school. Our building doors are locked during school hours. **All visitors must access the building at the main entrance by ringing the bell and identifying themselves and the purpose of their visit. Once admitted, please stop at the greeter's desk in the main lobby vestibule to show your photo identity, and obtain a visitor's sticker. We have an electronic system where all visitors to the building will have to present and scan their driver's license prior to gaining access.** The sticker must be worn when visiting school. Please do not compromise the security of our building by not following these rules. Visitors will not be permitted to go directly to the classrooms without stopping at the greeter desk.

REQUESTS FOR SCHOOL WORK

If your child is going to be absent for an extended period of time, please notify your child's teacher. Every effort will be made to inform you and your child of the topics that will be studied during an absence. Independent work cannot be provided in advance because teachers cannot predict the impact of each lesson during the classroom experience. Therefore, children should read and write in a journal every day during their absence. Important assignments can be made up upon your child's return.

NIGHTLY PRACTICE (Homework)

Practice makes a positive difference in sports, dance, music, and academics. Therefore, students are required to complete all nightly practice assignments and to return them to their teachers.

The District has assigned dates for "Family Connect Night". On these dates, there will be no homework assignments in order to encourage families to connect by participating in family activities together. These dates are listed on the District calendar.

MEET THE TEACHER NIGHTS

Meet the Teacher Nights are scheduled for early fall. Details about the evening will be sent home with students after school begins.

Meet the Teacher Night provides a wonderful opportunity to meet your child's teacher and visit the classroom. Information will be presented regarding plans for the year, classroom procedures, homework expectations, and the grade-level curriculum. The evening is designed to inform you and other parents; therefore, we ask that you make arrangements to attend this program without your children.

GRADE LEVEL EVENTS

When grade level events take place during the academic school day, such as the Kindergarten Circus, the Grade 2 Play, or the Grade 5 Moving Up Ceremony, **siblings are not permitted** to be pulled from their classes to be part of the audience. These programs are presented to parents and extended families. If a parent prefers a sibling be part of the audience, that child must be signed out of school for the entire school day.

IN SCHOOL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Students in grades K-2 may continue to bring small treats (the healthier the better) to celebrate their individual birthdays with their classes.

Students in grades 3-5 may bring in non-food items or healthy snacks that will be shared during lunch. Teachers in grades 3-5 will also be provided with a list of suggestions to celebrate their students' birthdays.

HEALTHY SNACKS

If your child's teacher schedules snack time, please select nut free products that are healthy and easy to eat. Please do not send in candy to celebrate holidays as our district is following a healthy snack policy.

PARTY INVITATIONS

It is school practice that absolutely no party invitations are to be distributed unless every child in the class is included. If this is not possible, then parents are asked to distribute invitations outside of school. This practice is in place to avoid hurt feelings among students who are not included.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Mills Pond Physical Education is a program that focuses on fitness, individual skills, cooperation, team concepts, and knowledge of sport activities. The students are encouraged to practice all activities at home to foster fitness and skill development. We have a list of expectations for our students to understand and follow.

- ◆ Sneakers must be on and tied
- ◆ Gum or candy is not permitted in school
- ◆ Hats, watches, or dangling jewelry is not permitted in class
- ◆ Practice good sportsmanship

STUDENT BELONGINGS

Expensive toys, electronic equipment (e.g. Smart Watches, Cell Phones, iPods, iPads, GameBoys, etc.) as well as any sports equipment (footballs, hockey sticks) that could pose a hazard to other students on the playground or bus will not be permitted in school. If a child brings such an item to school, it will be confiscated. An exception to this rule may be granted by a teacher for special circumstances (e.g., "Show and Tell", or when a student who has sustained an injury which excludes him or her from recess for a period of time). The School District is not responsible for the loss, damage or theft of personal property.

WHERE TO CALL

<u>Concern/Question</u>	<u>Person to Call</u>
Questions about child's progress/ classroom situation	Classroom Teacher 631-382-4305
To report an absence	Health Office 631-382-4306
Bus/bus stop questions Transportation Dept.	Main Office 631-382-4305 631-382-4100
Health	Mrs. Murphy 631-382-4307
School Psychologist	Mrs. Colleen Amari 631-382-4309
Social Work Services	Linda Donohue 631-382-4308
Reading Specialists	Mrs. Gorniok 631-382-4328 Mrs. Mendelsohn
Special Education Teachers	Ms. Begina 631-382-4305 Mrs. Nawrath Mrs. Patel Mrs. Truncale Mrs. Zbytniewski
Speech/Language Services	Mrs. Tomasic 631-382-4329
Art	Ms. Vanderveldt 631-382-4305
Library	Mrs. Bishop-Scioli 631-382-4314 Ms. Erin Lallier
Music & Instrumental Music	Ms. Stephanie Messana 631-382-4305
Instrumental Music	Mr. Thomas Terrett 631-382-4305
Physical Education	Mr. Neil Murtha 631-382-4305 Mr. Glenn Roper Mr. Michael Miller
Smithtown Parent Resource Center (School-aged childcare)	Mrs. Fiorello 631-360-7517
PTA President	Mrs. Nicole Petrocelli 631-327-7934



Welcome to the
POND