

August 21, 2020

Dear Parents and Students:

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year. This handbook is designed to give you an overview of important information regarding our Pre-K program at Hope Elementary School. New information has been added and changes from years past have been made due to COVID-19. Please take the time to review the contents. The handbook will be available through our school's website, www.fivetowns.net/HES. While this handbook is specific to Pre-K, it does not include all information regarding HES's response to COVID-19. It is imperative to review the 2020-21 Hope Elementary School Plan also available through our school's website, www.fivetowns.net/HES.

The Hope Elementary School staff works diligently to provide an environment that is caring, safe and educationally sound. This handbook may not address every situation that might arise over the course of the year; for this reason I urge you to call the school and speak with Mrs. Pride or me whenever you have questions or concerns. We are also easily available by email. Good communication with teachers, students and parents will help to ensure success for all. If there is a conflict between the handbook and school policies, the policy will govern. We also reserve the right to make changes to the handbook during the school year.

Once again, I offer my heartfelt welcome to students and parents as we begin the 2020-2021 school year. Our staff is prepared for another educationally rich and growth-filled year and more than ever, we need you to partner with our school during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

Danielle S. Fagonde
Hope Elementary School Principal

Hope Elementary School Pre-K Program 2020-2021

Mission Statement

To provide all 4 year olds living in the town of Hope access to a high quality, developmentally appropriate Pre-K program in order to enhance school readiness.

Early Childhood Philosophy

The philosophy of the Hope Elementary School Pre-K Program is based on the understanding of research-backed knowledge that the early childhood years are key to a student's future success. Our goal is to provide a safe, healthy and enriching environment where all developmental domains; cognitive, social-emotional, language, gross and fine motor skills will be enhanced through developmentally appropriate activities and strong family involvement. We believe quality pre-kindergarten education along with active family involvement will help every child develop the self confidence and love of learning essential for personal and school success.

Residency and Enrollment

Students must be four years old by October 15th in order to enroll in Hope Elementary School's Pre-K program. Students from other towns are able to enroll in Hope's Pre-K program, but they must have a superintendent's agreement if there is a public Pre-K program in the town where the student resides. Four year olds living in Hope have priority for enrollment purposes.

Attendance

Regular attendance and participation in Pre-K activities are the keys to success in school. Plenty of rest and a healthy diet will help your child come to school prepared to learn. Once enrolled, regular attendance is encouraged. If your child will be tardy or absent, we ask that you call 785-4081 or email Hope Elementary School office at HEsoffice@fivetowns.net.

Sample Schedule AM/PM

- Arrival
- Movement / gross motor play
- Circle-time
- Centers: math, literacy, science/exploration
- Snack
- Clean-up
- Choices: i.e. dramatic play, blocks, manipulatives
- Closing circle
- Departure

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

Morning session 8:00-11:00

Afternoon session 11:45-2:45

Pre-K students are to be dropped off and picked up at the main entrance of the Pre-K building located behind the main school building. The Pre-K teacher or Ed. tech. will meet your child at your vehicle and accompany them into the building. Students will use hand sanitizer after being dropped off and before joining others. Protocols for distancing and safety must be followed. All students and staff must complete a daily health check before arriving to school. Please refer to the 2020-21 Hope Elementary School Plan.

Students will be dismissed outside to their caregiver. Written permission by a parent/legal guardian must be provided stating who is allowed to pick up their child. Staff will not release a child to someone for whom we don't have parental permission to do so. Anyone other than a parent/legal guardian must sign the student out daily. We are asking Pre-K families to transport their child due to a limited number of bus seats this year.

Family Communication

We value family/school communication. There will be a weekly Pre-K newsletter with a recap of what your child has been learning and doing at school and a look ahead to what will be happening in the future. Child development topics are often included as well as important dates to know.

In addition, the HES school newsletter, Hawk's Eye, is published weekly throughout the school year and will be emailed to families on Friday. If necessary, parents may request paper copies of these newsletters. Please read this publication to stay current on school information and upcoming dates. The Hawk's Eye is also available on our school website at hes.fivetowns.net. Pre-K students will bring home a blue Home/School communication folder with a weekly *Highlights of My Week at Pre-K* sheet. There is a pocket for parents to send materials back to school. Mrs. Pride is available at 785-4088 (Pre-K building) or via email at marybethpride@fivetowns.net.

Parent Volunteers

Typically we love having volunteers at Hope Pre-K! This year due to Covid-19, we will not be able to have volunteers in our classrooms. We will be exploring ways to incorporate volunteers such as having a family member share an activity or read a favorite book to students via Zoom. We ALWAYS welcome ideas and donations of resources.

Parent/Teacher Conferences and Progress Reports

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled for October and January. Notification will be communicated through the Hawk's Eye asking parents to call school to schedule a conference with the classroom teacher(s). Progress reports will be issued three times a year.

Early Release Days

There are four early release days in our school calendar. Some are to accommodate parent / teacher conferences and others are prior to vacations. On these days there will not be an afternoon session.

School Closings

In the event that school must be cancelled or closed early because of snow, announcements will be made on TV channels WABI, WLBZ2, WCSH, WVII, and their websites, and posted on the Internet at www.villagesoup.com. The most current status will be on the central office recording at 763-3818 and Villagesoup.com. Each parent has been asked to complete an Emergency School Closure form, giving us instructions on where your child should go in the event that an early dismissal occurs during the school day. Snow days and delayed starts will also be announced to each home via our automated phone system. On days there is a delayed start at HES, there will be no morning Pre-K.

Fridays

Fridays are designated as teacher planning and preparation days and several Fridays are designated for family days. There will be activities planned throughout the year. We ask that parents attend these "Family Friday" activities with their child. Fridays are not intended for drop off.

Belongings

Please label your child's jackets, sweaters, lunchboxes, water bottles, backpacks, etc. with their name so they can get all their belongings safely home each day. We ask that children do not bring toys to school.

Extra Clothes

We ask that you send in an extra set of clothes (including socks and underwear) in a Ziploc bag labeled with your child's name. They will be kept at school "just in case." Please supply us with a new set of clean clothes after an accident occurs.

Dress Code

The Pre-K program is an active place to learn! Children paint, glue, play in sand and play outdoors almost every day. Please dress your child in sturdy comfortable clothing that can get dirty so that your child can get messy without worrying. Make sure your child's clothing are easy to pull up and down for bathroom needs. Belts are not recommended. Please dress your child for the weather. Remember that we go outside every day unless there is heavy rain. Labeling is recommended.

This year we are developing an outdoor classroom area so children will be outside a significant part of their day. Children need sturdy closed toe shoes or

sneakers that can get dirty and an easy to put on pair of clean sneakers for indoor activities.

School Supplies

Your child will need a **small** backpack or tote bag to carry artwork and other materials home and an oversized tee shirt to be used as an art smock. The paint smock will be left at school. HES will be providing each child with their own "school kit" which will be left at school and used only by your child. These kits will contain school supplies to be used just by your child and the kits and materials will be cleaned daily.

Snacks

Time during each session will be set aside for snack. Please send in a healthy snack and water daily. Filtered drinking water is always available at school. Free snack items are available to all children who qualify. Federal funds for our Title I program are determined by the number of students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. Parents are encouraged to fill out the federal application form that determines eligibility. School officials hold parental information provided on the federal application in strict confidentiality.

Birthdays

We recognize birthdays with a crown for the birthday child and sing *Happy Birthday*. We are happy to pass out birthday party invitations, however if they are passed out at school, every classmate must receive an invitation.

Illness/Medications/Nursing Services

If your child must miss school because he or she is sick please call the school by 8:30 a.m. Often it is difficult to know whether your child should come to school if he/she is not feeling well in the morning. Please refer to Appendix A in the 2020-21 Hope Elementary School Plan. Many times when we have to call a parent during the day to pick up an ill child, we are told that the parent suspected that the child wouldn't make it through the day. Unfortunately, the whole class gets exposed when an ill child comes to school. Please help us keep everyone as healthy as possible by checking to see if your child is running a fever when you hear complaints of "not feeling good". A fever is *one* indicator that a child may be coming down with something and might be better off staying home. Students should be fever-free, without a fever reducer, for 24 hours before returning to school. Also, if you feel that your child is too ill to go outside at recess, he/she is probably too ill to be at school.

School personnel, by Maine law, may not administer medication. Children who must take prescription medication during school hours must have a Drug Administration Form (see the back of this handbook for a blank form) on file in the office signed by both the parent and the attending physician. Medication will not be administered without this form on file. Please bring this form to school along with the medication to be administered. Students should not transport medications on the bus. All medication must be properly labeled in the original container with amounts and times of medication clearly stated. Medication will

be kept in a secure place and will be administered by a designated member of the school staff. Daily records will be kept of the administration of medication. Permission may be given for the administration of Tylenol/Advil as needed. The school will only administer medication (including Tylenol & Advil) that *you* provide. The school will not provide this medication for students. Health records are maintained for each student and follow the student throughout his/her entire school experience.

We do have a nurse who administers our annual vision and hearing screening, reviews immunization records, update individual allergy and emergency plans, triage all students with regard to injuries and illness throughout the day, and communicate with parents to highlight a few of the school nurse's responsibilities.

Parents are encouraged to read and review the 2020-21 Hope Elementary School Plan with the Covid-19 plans and guidelines which is being provided via email from our school principal, Mrs. Fagonde and may be accessed at the HES website.