

***PACE CHARTER SCHOOL of HAMILTON***  
**PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**





**Dear Parents/Guardians,**

**I hope this message finds you well and excited for the upcoming school year. As we prepare to embark on this new academic journey, I am pleased to present the Pace Charter School of Hamilton, Parent/Student Handbook. This handbook serves as a valuable resource to guide you through our school's policies, procedures, and expectations.**

**This is a time of growth, discovery, and learning, and this handbook has been designed to help foster a positive and safe environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. It outlines important information on school rules, attendance, grading, extracurricular activities, and much more.**

**Our dedicated staff have worked diligently to create an inclusive and nurturing community that encourages active participation and collaboration. We believe that a strong partnership between students, parents, and school personnel is essential for your child's success. By familiarizing yourself with the contents of the handbook, you'll be better equipped to support your child's educational journey.**

**Please take the time to carefully review the handbook together. Discuss the expectations and guidelines with your child, as this will help establish a solid foundation for a successful school year. If you have any questions or need further clarification on any of the information provided, don't hesitate to reach out to our school office.**

**To access the digital version of the Parent/Student Handbook, please visit our school website. We encourage you to keep a copy for easy reference throughout the year.**

**Thank you for entrusting us with the education and development of your child. We are committed to providing a supportive and enriching learning environment where each student can flourish. The mission of Pace Charter School of Hamilton is to instill in our students a lifelong love for learning supported by an appreciation for the use of knowledge.**

**Here's to a year filled with growth, achievements, and memorable experiences!**

**Warm regards,**

**Deborah A. Pontoriero  
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## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular school attendance is necessary for a successful school experience. Instructional continuity is interrupted and the valuable interaction that occurs with teachers and among fellow students is lost when a student is frequently absent, tardy or dismissed early from school.

Realizing that regular attendance in school is necessary for students to gain maximum benefits from public education, the Board of Trustees urges all parents/guardians to stress punctuality and regular attendance habits with their children.

In addition, the school laws of New Jersey, specifically *N.J.S.A. 18A:38-28* through 31, requires all children between the ages of 6-16 to attend school. Students are not permitted to be absent for more than ten (10) percent or eighteen (18) days of the academic calendar year.

### **Excused Absence:**

Any child who is absent from school must present a **written excuse**. The note must clearly indicate the **reason for absence** and must be presented **within three school days** from the child's return to school.

The school will classify an absence as "excused" for one of the following reasons only:

- Religious observances
- Educational tours

**Religious Observation:** For full or part-time absence of a student to observe a religious holiday, it is necessary that a written request for absence be presented to the school prior to the religious holiday(s).

**Educational Tours:** Requests by parents/guardians for permission to have children absent from school for educational tours must be made to and processed by the principal or his/her designee.

### **Unexcused Absences:**

All absences for reasons other than those cited above will be considered as "unexcused."

The student and parent/guardian will be notified of a first and second unexcused absence. When a student accumulates three days of unexcused absence in a school year, the principal shall send an official "first offense notice" to the parent/guardian and a copy to the Board of Trustees.

It is the policy of the Board of Education that, "All absent students regardless of the reason, must complete assignments which, in the professional opinion of the teacher, are necessary to assure the continuity of the instructional program." Because illness can result in a student getting drastically far behind in his/her work, you are urged to take the following steps in helping him/her to keep up with his/her class. Early in the year, have your child make arrangements with a reliable classmate to be able to call him/her to get assignments during absent periods.

If illness arises without warning, parents can pick up student textbooks and any work.

The Board of Trustees may request a parent to appear before the board to explain noncompliance to the attendance policy prior to contacting the Hamilton Township truancy officer.

**Tardiness:**

A student is considered tardy when he/she is late to school and or class. Tardy students are responsible for all classroom assignments and activities including tests and quizzes. If a student is going to be tardy, the parent/guardian is required to notify the school by phone or email.

Disciplinary policy regarding tardiness to school/class per each academic trimester (enforces consistency for all students). Consistent tardiness can result in the following consequences.

- lunch detention
- telephone notification
- letter sent home
- parent conference
- in school suspension (ISS)
- loss of extra curricular activities

**STUDENT ATTIRE/DRESS CODE**

Students at Pace Charter School of Hamilton shall adhere to the following attire/dress code:

**Lower School:**

**Regular Uniform**

- Pants, shorts, skirts, or jumpers:

- Navy blue or tan
- **Shirt:**
  - Pace Uniform shirt
  - Plain navy blue or royal collared shirt
  - White collared shirts may be worn under jumpers

### **Physical Education Uniform**

- **Sweat/Athletic pants, shorts, leggings:**
  - Black, navy blue, or gray
- **Shirt:**
  - Pace issued shirts of any kind
  - Spirit Wear
  - Red, navy blue, or gray shirt/sweatshirt
- **Shoes:**
  - Sneakers MUST be worn

### **Intermediate School:**

#### **Regular Uniform:**

- **Pants, Shorts, Skirts, Jumpers**
  - Black, navy blue, or tan
  - Pants with rips or holes are **not allowed**.
- **Shirt:**
  - Pace Uniform shirt
  - Navy or royal blue collard shirt
  - White collared shirts may be worn under jumpers

#### **Physical Education Uniform:**

- **Sweat/Athletic pants, shorts, leggings:**
  - Black, navy blue, or gray
- **Shirt:**
  - Pace issued shirts of any kind
  - Spirit Wear
  - Red, navy blue, or gray shirt/sweatshirt

- **Shoes:**
  - Sneakers MUST be worn to participate.

## **Middle School:**

### **Dress Code**

- Slacks, shorts, skirts, or khakis:
  - Black, navy blue, or tan
  - Jeans, sweatpants, leggings, jeggings, yoga pants, bike shorts, are **not allowed**.
- Shirt:
  - Pace Uniform shirt OR plain black, gray, navy blue, or red collared shirt is required.

### **Physical Education Attire/Dress Code:**

- Shorts/Pants:
  - Black, navy blue, or gray
  - Sweatpants, leggings, and yoga pants are permitted. Bike shorts are **not allowed**.
- Shirt:
  - Pace issued shirts of any kind OR plain black, navy blue, gray, or red shirt is required

\*Attire/dress of any kind with a logo (other than a Pace Charter School of Hamilton logo) larger than 5 inches is **not permitted**.

\*Crew neck sweatshirts (Pace issued or plain black, navy blue, gray, or red) are permitted to be worn throughout the school day, but must not have pockets or a hood, no exceptions. NO HOODS or POCKETS of any kind are permitted.

## **SCHOOL NURSE**

### **Illness or Injury When at School:**

If a child should become sick or is injured while at school, the nurse will administer first aid as necessary to prevent further complications. Note, by law, a nurse cannot administer any medication without the written permission of a parent and an order from a medical doctor, nor can she make a medical diagnosis of an illness or injury.

If a child becomes ill or injured at school, a parent or guardian will be notified to pick the student up from school. A child that develops a fever over 100 ° F and/or has had 2 or more episodes of vomiting or diarrhea cannot remain in school. It is recommended that any student who becomes ill or injured while at school, is evaluated by a doctor. The child must be picked up within one (1) hour of the initial phone call.

If an injury appears serious, the parent will be contacted to transport the child to the doctor or hospital. Only in extreme emergencies, where the parent, and/or the other person designated on the emergency health card cannot be reached, will an injured student be transported to the emergency room of the local hospital, accompanied by a staff member .

### **Injuries or Illness When at Home:**

If your child is sick before leaving for school, please keep him/her at home that day.

In order to attend school a student must be:

- Fever free for 24 hours, this means; less than 100 ° F, without the use of fever reducing medicines-such as Tylenol or Motrin.
- Should not have vomited or had diarrhea and be tolerating regular foods for 24 hours before returning to school.
- If being treated for an infection, he/she needs to be on the antibiotic for 24 hours and symptoms improve before returning to school.

Your child will not be permitted to attend school if:

- She/he has a sore throat with fever, is wheezing (not relieved by prescribed medication), has a frequent cough or sneezing, or a very stuffy/runny nose and is unable to manage it in a way that protects the rest of the class from exposure.
- She/he has conjunctivitis (pink eye), head or body lice, impetigo, scabies, unusual skin rash. Any of these conditions must be treated before returning to school. A doctor's note will be required.

### **Physical Education:**

If a student is unable to participate in physical education classes, a medical excuse by a doctor must be presented to the nurse's office.

### **Absences:**

Parents/guardians are to call the main office or nurses office to report all student absences.



## COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The following are rules related to communicable diseases/health concerns and school exclusion:

Infection or Condition	Common Symptoms	Exclusion for School
Acute Respiratory Illness	Fever, runny nose, congestion, sore throat, cough	Until fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication
Conjunctivitis (Pink eye)	Pink or red eye with white or yellow discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep, eye pain, or redness	Until examined by a medical provider and approved for return
Gastrointestinal Illness	Frequent loose or watery stools, abdominal cramps/tenderness, or fever  Vomiting more than 2 times in 24 hours	<u>Diarrhea</u> : until stool frequency is less than 2 stools above normal frequency for that child <u>Vomiting</u> : no more than 2 times in 24 hours
Coxsackievirus (Hand Foot and Mouth)	Fever, sore throat, tired, ulcers or blisters in or around hands, feet, or other areas of the body	Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication
Influenza (Flu)	Sudden onset of fever, headache, chills, tired, sore throat, nasal congestions, cough, mild pink eye, or abdominal pain	Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication
Norovirus (Stomach bug)	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps. May also have low grade fever, chills, body aches, or headache.	24-48 hours after symptoms have stopped
Streptococcal pharyngitis (Strep throat)	Fever, sore throat, exudative tonsillitis or pharyngitis, enlarged lymph nodes. May also have sandpaper-like rash.	Until at least 12 hours after antibiotic treatments have been started

## HEALTH EXAMINATIONS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

Students who are enrolled in the school in grades K and 6, or are enrolling for the first time, shall present a Universal Child Health Record to attest to their physical condition.

Every student who enters the school for the first time, or is in grades K and 6, shall also present an immunization record as required by law. A parent/guardian who because of

religious convictions does not wish his/her child to be vaccinated must state this in writing, as well as complete an Acknowledgement of Religious Exemption form that can be obtained from the school.

In order to protect the health of the children and staff in the school, all regulations of the State Department of Education, the State Department of Health and the local Board of Health shall be scrupulously observed, particularly those dealing with contagious/infectious diseases or conditions.

## **NURSE SCREENINGS**

It is mandated by State Law that all students receive annual screenings:

- All students in grades K - 8 are to receive height, weight, and blood pressure screenings annually.
- Students in grades 5 and 7 are to be screened for scoliosis.
- Students in grades K - 3 and 7, are to receive hearing screenings.
- Students in grade K-2, 4 and 8 are to receive vision screenings.

\*To be excluded from the above screenings for any reason, a written request is necessary with the understanding the screening will be done by a private physician at the parent's expense and a report forwarded to the school nurse.

It is recommended that students receive regular dental exams and care, as well as a yearly physical exam. If assistance is needed in obtaining dental or health care, please contact the school nurse.

## **DIRECTIONS FOR MORNING DROP-OFF**

Please enter and exit in appropriately marked areas. Students will utilize the front doors to enter the building. Parents are to follow the flow of traffic in and out.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL:** Please enter the parking lot from Lafayette Avenue, and form three (3) orderly lines. Once the school doors open, please exit the lot in an orderly fashion, either to Broad Street or Lafayette Avenue.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Written notes from parents are necessary to excuse students from school before regular dismissal time. Requests to leave school for part of the day should be presented to the school office for approval before period one on the day an early dismissal is desired.

Every student who leaves the school before regular dismissal must be signed out by his/her parent/guardian and present proper photo identification.

## **ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE**

The Pace Board of Trustees has authorized the use of electronic surveillance systems on school property. The system will be used to monitor student behavior in order to promote and maintain a safe environment and for other security purposes.

Students and parents are hereby notified that the content of the surveillance system may be used in a student disciplinary proceeding. Surveillance content will be routinely erased on a periodic basis and will be retained if necessary for use in a student disciplinary proceeding or other matter as determined by the administration.

## **BUILDING SECURITY PROCEDURES FOR VISITORS**

All visitors, including parents/guardians, must announce themselves at the call box at the main entrance (Door 1) of our building, and must show proper photo identification upon request. Visitors may not be admitted without proper identification. Upon entering the building, visitors are required to report to the Main Office to sign-in. Upon signing in, visitors will be issued a visitor badge. The badge must be worn throughout their visit in our building. Visitors should return to the Main Office to sign-out and must return their visitors badge upon exiting our building.

Visitors are asked to ensure that the door locks securely when entering and exiting the building. Your cooperation in helping to maintain a safe and secure environment for our students, staff, and visitors is greatly appreciated. Do not hold the door open to allow anyone else to enter the building.

## **EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION OF CANCELLATION, DELAYED OPENING OR EARLY DISMISSAL**

Inclement weather can cause the cancellation of school, an hour and a half (90 minute) delayed opening or an early dismissal if the Superintendent of Schools believes conditions threaten the safety of children walking or being bused to and from school.

Pace Charter School of Hamilton regularly posts this information on its website, email, and robocall.

## **DELAYED OPENING SCHEDULE**

This procedure allows for an hour and a half (90 minute) delayed opening of school due to inclement weather conditions or other emergency conditions. Bus students should report to bus stops an hour and a half (90 minutes) later than the regular time in order to be in school according to the schedule below.

- Lower/Intermediate: 9:45 am arrival
- Middle School: 9:30 am arrival

## **EARLY DISMISSAL SCHEDULE**

The early dismissal schedule is utilized for the opening and closing days of the school year and for inclement weather. All parents/guardians will be notified using the message systems stated above.

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

Pace Charter School of Hamilton has zero tolerance for inappropriate behavior.

The behaviors listed under each statement of student expectations are examples only and, therefore, do not represent the full range of inappropriate behavior.

- Prepare themselves mentally and physically for the process of learning.
- Demonstrate respect for people and property.
- Take responsibility for their own behavior and learning.
- Use time and other resources responsibly.
- Share responsibilities when working as members of a group.
- Meet the unique requirements of each class.
- Monitor their own progress towards objectives.
- Communicate with parents and school personnel about school-related matters.

## **FINES**

Textbooks, workbooks, lockers, and electronic devices are the property of Pace Charter School of Hamilton Board of Trustees. Loss or damage to any school property may result in fines being levied and possible disciplinary action and/or loss of privilege of a field trip or attendance at a special event.

## **GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT**

The basic responsibility of the Guidance Department is to assist each student in making his/her school experiences as enriching as possible. The guidance counselor works to ensure home to school connections are positive and effective.

The functions of the department are summarized below:

Counseling on a one-to-one or small group basis

Present lessons in small and/or large group settings

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled by teachers. Parents are urged to keep in touch with the teachers, especially when they receive a progress report which suggests they do so. Please be sure to access Power School in order to track the academic progress of your child. Conferences are available in English and Spanish.

## **LATE BUSES**

Should a bus be late leaving the school, the parents/guardians will be notified of those students via phone, either by the main office or a robocall.

## **LAVATORY FACILITIES**

Use of the facilities during the school day requires a pass/permission from a specific teacher.

## **LOCKERS**

Student lockers may be searched and/or cleaned out periodically during the school year. The principal or his/her designee, may conduct a search of a student's person or belongings if the search is necessary to maintain discipline and order in the school, and the school official has a reasonable suspicion that the student is concealing contraband. All searches and seizures conducted by designated school staff shall comply with the standards prescribed by the Federal and State laws.

The school is not responsible for lost or stolen articles.

Students are not allowed to write, draw, or put stickers on the inside or outside of their lockers or anywhere else.

## **LUNCH**

All students must eat their lunch in the school cafeteria. **Lunch should be brought to school upon arrival and not dropped off once the school day commences, as this disrupts the flow and organization of regular day-to-day functions of the school.**

## **REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS**

Report cards are issued three times each year in December, March, and June. Trimesters are roughly twelve (12) weeks long. Supplementary progress reports are issued at the midpoint of each trimester in grades 3-8. Intermediate/Middle School academic progress can be tracked daily utilizing Power School.

## **SCHOLASTIC EXPECTATIONS**

Each teacher has a right to expect the best. Report card grades, 0-100, are awarded on the basis of ability and effort as applied within the class. Doing one's best in every class, on every assignment, and studying for every test, will usually assure passing grades.

If a student is having difficulty in class, he/she should first discuss the problem with his/her teacher in that class. Teachers are available for assistance and guidance.

Students can receive academic recognition for receiving excellent and above average grades during a trimester.

**Note:** Students who wish to participate in any extracurricular activity, shall be able to do so upon earning a grade point average of at least 75 in all classes, both academic and specials.

## **Honor Roll**

- Intermediate School: Students who earn an 80-100, A's and B's, in all classes, shall qualify for Honor Roll for the academic period.

- Middle School: Students who earn an 84-89 in all classes, shall qualify for Honor Roll for the academic period.

### **High Honor Roll**

- Middle School: Students who earn a 90-94 in all classes, shall qualify for the High Honor Roll for the academic period.

### **Principal Honor Roll**

- Intermediate School: Students who earn a 90-100 in all classes, shall qualify for the Principal Honor Roll for the academic period.
- Middle School: Students who earn a 95 and above in all classes, shall qualify for the Principal Honor Roll for the academic period.

## **HOMEWORK POLICY**

A critical and integral component in the teaching/learning process is the homework assignments. Assignments can and should be used as an aid in the instructional process in every teaching discipline. The difficulty, length, type, or circumstances of each assignment should vary depending on its effectiveness in reaching a desired educational outcome. Assignments may vary in terms of length or difficulty.