

# Mount Vernon Avenue Elementary School



**Where Scholars Learn to *SOAR!***

*Success, Ownership, Attitude, Respect*

**2020-2021**

**Parent – Scholar Handbook**

*Nicole Gilmore, Principal*

*Yolanda Dentley, Vice Principal*

54 Mount Vernon Avenue

Irvington, NJ 07111

973-399-6875

IRVINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Irvington, NJ 07111



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**Formal Acknowledgment of Receipt of 2020-2021 Parent-Scholar Handbook**

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT MUST BE RETURNED**

## **MOUNT VERNON AVENUE SCHOOL VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT 2020-2021**

The vision and mission statement of Mount Vernon Avenue School was developed by a committee representing a wide cross-section of the Mount Vernon Avenue School staff, along with significant input from parents and scholars. Our vision and mission statement is as follows:

We, the parents, scholars, and staff of Mount Vernon Avenue School, will provide, to the best of our ability, a safe, clean, drug-free environment for all.

As a community of learners, we will seek to achieve academic excellence for all scholars by providing a multi-diversified program, which will include a flexible up-to-date curriculum, modern technology, higher-order thinking skills and a caring highly qualified staff. This program will provide our scholars with the necessary 21<sup>st</sup> century skills to excel in society and an atmosphere in which children will develop physically, socially, and emotionally. In that atmosphere, they will respect cultural diversity by showing an appreciation for all. The school will provide an avenue, which will enable scholars to become responsible, productive citizens in a global society.

The scholars will develop a feeling of pride and a positive sense of self. This setting will enhance the learning of everyone.

Mount Vernon Avenue School's vision and mission statement is fully compatible with the district's, as they both stress the development of the whole child; that is, not just the academic aspect of schooling, but the physical, social, and emotional areas as well.

## I. DIRECTORIES, FACULTY, STAFF LISTING

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### School Hours

**Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Scholars' Hours: 8:25 a.m. - 2:50 p.m.**  
*Scholars are considered late at 8:35 am*

**Half-day Hours for Scholars: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

### Telephone Directory

Main Office..... (973)399-6875

#### **Administration**

Nicole Gilmore, Principal..... (973)399-6875  
ngilmore@irvington.k12.nj.us

Yolanda Dentley, Vice Principal.....(973)399-6875  
ydentley@irvington.k12.nj.us

#### **Office Personnel**

Pamela Graves, Register Secretary (973) 399-6875 Ext. 1414 [pgraves@irvington.k12.nj.us](mailto:pgraves@irvington.k12.nj.us)  
Elisha Jones, Secretary (973) 399-6875 Ext. 1402 [ejones@irvington.k12.nj.us](mailto:ejones@irvington.k12.nj.us)  
Aminah Wright, Secretary (973) 399-6875 Ext. 1401 [awright@irvington.k12.nj.us](mailto:awright@irvington.k12.nj.us)

#### **Scholar Support**

Chris Ann Karsen, Guidance Counselor (973) 399-6826 Ext. 1403  
[cakarsen@irvington.k12.nj.us](mailto:cakarsen@irvington.k12.nj.us)

Safiya Bashir, Health & Social Services Social Worker (973)399-6875 Ext. 1415  
[sbashir@irvington.k12.nj.us](mailto:sbashir@irvington.k12.nj.us)

#### **Parent Coordinator**

Clara Thomas, Parent Coordinator (973)399-6875 Ext. 1417/1418  
[cthomas@irvington.k12.nj.us](mailto:cthomas@irvington.k12.nj.us)

#### **Medical Office**

Edna Fameux, Nurse (973) 399-6875 Ext. 1412  
Ana Camacho, Clerk (973) 399-6875 Ext. 1412

#### **Custodial Office**

Rasheed Benton, Head Custodian (973) 399-6875 [rbenton@irvington.k12.nj.us](mailto:rbenton@irvington.k12.nj.us)

## Mount Vernon Avenue Elementary School Staff Listing 2020-2021

<u>GRADE</u>	<u>ROOM</u>	<u>TEACHER</u>
K-1	131	Karen Adams-Parker (GE)
K-2	126	Tashira Wheeler (SE)
K-3	128	Jessica Chila (Spanish Bilingual)
K-4	133	Regine Sauveur (Haitian Creole Bilingual)
1-1	138	Mia Appling (GE)
1-2	139	Deborah Sanders (SE)
1-3	135	Stacy Sanchez (Spanish ESL)
1-4	136	Keisha Domond (Creole Bilingual)
1-5	215	Talesha Jones (GE)
2-1	226	Vilma Charlery (GE)
2-2	231	Tamie Adamafio (SE)
2-3	233	Diana Moreno (GE)
2-4	228	Vendetta Manley-Keyes (ESL)
3-1	240	Cathy-Anne Alvaradous (SE -ELA/SS)
3-2	241	Sundjata Sekou (GE Math/Sci)
3-3	242	Vedalyn Chuck (GE Math/Sci)
3-4	243	Rosandra Alba (ESL ELA/SS)
4-1	340	Kandace Clarke (GE Math/Sci)
4-2	341	Terrance Henry (SE ELA/SS)
4-3	342	Thelma Watson (ESL ELA/SS) (sub)
4-4	343	Geraldine Emeh (Math/Sci)
5-1	331	Renee Nixon (Math/Sci)
5-2	333	Rose Magny (ESL/ELA/SS)
5-3	328	Gail McNeil (SE/Math/Sci)
5-4	338	Shayna Scott (SE/ELA/SS)



<b><u>SPECIALS</u></b>	<b><u>ROOM</u></b>	<b><u>TEACHER</u></b>
Art	213 (K-5)	Alicia Bynoe-Ferrell
Building Sub	339	Thelma Watson
Care Plus	203	Amanda Jiosi (District Wide)
Custodian (Head)	235	Rasheed Benton
ESL/ELL	337 (K-2)	Iman Haddia
ESL/ELL	337 (3-5)	Jennifer Ostrega
Guidance	102C (K-5)	Chris Ann Karsen
HSSC	102B ( K-5 )	Safiya Bashir
Inclusion/ELA	239 (K-5)	Fonda Dortch-Taylor
Inclusion/Math	335 (K-5)	Zenobia Saunderson
Instrumental Music	217 (TH,F)	Marianne Mroz
Media Specialist	202 (K-5)	Nadia Palma
Medical Clerk	118(Medical Office) (T, TH)	Ana Camacho
Music/Kdg-5 <sup>th</sup>	117 (K-5)	Christina Girvin
Nurse	118 (Medical Office)	Vacant
Parent Coordinator	205	--
Physical Education	Gym/116 (K-5)	Abdelkader Laib
Resource Officer	N/A	Pamela Bryant
RITE OFFICE	222	Sam Williams
Speech		Diana Basile
Tech Coach	207 (T,TH)	Perry Schatzow
Vice Principal	237	Yolanda Dentley
World Language	326 (MWF)	Victor Munoz

**Office Staff**

Pamela Graves	Secretary
Elisha Jones	Secretary
Aaminah Wright	Secretary

**Security**

Vanessa Bryant  
Destiny Herrill  
Elroy McMillian  
Van Seabron  
Shelia Taylor

**Custodial Staff**

Rasheed Benton	Days (Head Custodian)
Terrance Carroll	Nights
Riccardi Henriquez	Days
Pierre Joseph	Nights
Wilson Spann	Days

**Breakfast/Lunch Aides**

Sharlene Carter
Felisa Cooper
Marie White
TBD
TBD

## II. DEPARTMENTS

### **Guidance Department**

Mount Vernon's guidance counselor works with the scholars, teachers, and parents under the direction of the principal. The counselors also seek the assistance of the Child Study Team and community resources when necessary. Rapport on a one-to-one and group basis is an important part of the counseling process to help scholars establish life skills and resolve personal, social, and emotional problems. Guidance, therefore, hopes to provide an opportunity for individuals to grow and develop their potential to the maximum.

### **Parent Coordinator**

The Parent Coordinator's goal is to increase parental and community involvement in the school community. The Parent Coordinator facilitates monthly parent workshops designed to provide parents/guardians with resources and educate them on matters that affect their child's academic performance and development. Such workshops have included Early Literacy Skills, Numeracy and Technology, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Informational sessions. Parents are provided with certificates of attendance; door prizes are given at each workshop and an annual parent dinner celebrating highly active and engaged parents/guardians.

### **Health and Social Services Coordinator**

Scholars requiring additional counseling sessions are supported through our Health and Social Services Coordinator (HSSC). HSSC's are master's level, clinically trained social workers that deliver services aimed at removing the roadblocks to success so that each scholar can reach their potential and have academic success. Additionally, they provide support to parents by introducing them to support agencies throughout the Irvington community.

### **Special Services**

At Mt. Vernon Avenue Elementary School, scholars with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) receive instruction in an inclusion classroom alongside their general education peers. Following a co-teaching model, our Special Education Teachers support scholars with an IEP in ELA and Math. Regardless of a child's classification, Mt. Vernon Ave. School encourages high expectations, variability, and flexibility in instruction to meet their unique needs while addressing the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

### **Child Study Team**

The Child Study Team consists of three members: a learning disability teacher consultant, a psychologist, and social worker. The primary role of the team is to evaluate scholars who may experience learning and/or an emotional difficulty and to provide, when necessary, supportive services.

### **Bilingual/ESL/ELL Programs**

Many scholars come to our schools with little or no knowledge of English. However, many of them come with highly developed academic skills in their native languages. The Bilingual/ESL Program was established to develop and expand the scholars' reading, writing, listening, and other academic skills at the time they are learning English. The Bilingual and English as a

Second Language Program is a transitional program. Participants receive a maximum of three years of daily instruction in Reading, Mathematics, and English as a Second Language.

### **Speech Therapy**

Therapy in speech and language is offered to scholars who are experiencing difficulty in the articulation of sounds and/or in the reception of the expression of language. The therapist provides instruction, individually or in small groups, up to several times a week, depending on the needs of the scholars.

### **Health Services**

Good health is basic to learning. School health services include growth, dental, vision, hearing, TB, scoliosis, and physical screenings, as required by state law and in accordance with district policy. These services are coordinated and/or carried out by a full-time certified school nurse in consultation with the school physician.

In addition, the school nurse maintains accurate health records on all scholars, manages illness/injury occurring during school hours, confers with staff and parents, participates in the child study process, counsels scholars in matters of health, and is a resource person in health education.

The primary responsibility for health rests with the parent or guardian. In school, management of illness and injury is limited to first aid. The parent or guardian will be contacted in situations that may need further attention. If non-urgent, it will be the parent's responsibility to come to the school and have treatment rendered as necessary. In matters of urgency, the scholars may be referred to the family physician or emergency squad. Therefore, since there is a possibility of parents/ guardians not being home in such instances, it is necessary to have parents/guardians complete and sign the scholar emergency form with name, address, and telephone number of a relative or friend who will assume responsibility in the absence of parents or a physician.

Please keep the school nurse informed of changes in your child's health (including medication) for safety and health record accuracy.

### III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, POLICIES, AND GUIDELINES

#### Curriculum

Scholars in grades kindergarten through grade five are required to complete the requirements in Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Music, Art, Physical Education, and Library. World Language is offered for scholars in grades four and five only. Curricular programs and resources satisfy the criteria established by the New Jersey Department of Education using the NJ Student Learning Standards.

#### Grading

Scholars receive a grade in all required courses. Grades are obtained by taking an average of all classwork, homework, projects, assessments, and other factors determined by the course, curriculum, as well as the teacher and departmental requirements.

The grading scale is as follows:

##### Kindergarten

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- S.....Strength
- M.....Meeting Learning Standards
- W.....Weakness
- N/A.....Learning Standard Not Addressed this Marking Period

##### Grades 1 - 5

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- A.....(90-100) Outstanding Achievement
- B.....(89-80) High Achievement
- C.....(79-70) Average Achievement
- D.....(69-60) Below Average Achievement
- F.....(Below 60) Significantly Below Average Achievement

All scholars receive a grade for **Personal and Social Development** using the following scale:

- O..... Outstanding
- S..... Satisfactory
- N..... Needs Improvement
- U..... Unsatisfactory

According to Irvington Board of Education policy, “in all elementary schools the 1st and 3rd report cards will be given to parents at a scheduled conference. For the remaining reporting periods, the report card will be sent home with the child.

#### **Super Honor Roll/Honor Roll (scholars in grades 2 – 5)**

**Super Honor Roll:** “A’s” and not more than one “B” in an academic subject. “A’s” and not more than one B in special and/or minor subjects. No marks lower than a “B”.

**Honor Roll:** “A’s” and “B’s” in all four academic subjects, with no mark lower than a “B” in special and/or minor subjects. No marks lower than a “B”.

***A scholar receiving N or U letters on the report card is ineligible for Super Honor Roll or Honor Roll.***

## **Assessments**

The instructional program is evaluated annually on a district-wide basis. Each year all elementary scholars are given the battery designed for each grade level. Scholars in Kindergarten through grade two are evaluated with the administration of the Foundational Reading Assessment (FRA). Scholars in grades 3, 4, and 5 are evaluated annually with the administration of the Partnership for Assessment of College and Career Readiness (PARCC). For more information, please consult [www.parcconline.org](http://www.parcconline.org). Parents who wish to discuss the test results should contact the school Guidance Counselor.

Scholars in kindergarten through grade five are also assessed using the district curriculum's unit assessments. These tests serve as indicators of potential "At Risk" scholars and provide additional data necessary to develop a supportive instructional program.

## **Homework**

The amount of homework is based on scholar's needs and considers other activities, which make a legitimate claim on the scholar's time. The homework process recognizes the role of the parent to help the scholar carry out assigned responsibility. We urge that parents take time to check the assignments before they are returned to the teacher and to regularly check their child's progress on completing homework and other assignments on the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

### **Make-Up Work**

Scholars absent for any reason (illness, suspension, etc.) must make up assignments, class work, and tests within a reasonable length of time. It is suggested that scholars who have been absent from school for an extended time should be permitted the same length of time to make up assignments. For example, a child absent for five consecutive school days should have five days to complete all make-up work.

Parents may call the school office to request homework assignments. These assignments may be picked up at the school office after dismissal (2:50 pm) or be brought home by a brother, sister, or "study buddy" attending our school, if requested. It is the scholar and parent's responsibility to ensure make-up work is submitted to the teacher to ensure a grade is received.

## **Progress Reports and Report Cards**

Progress reports are sent home during the middle of each cycle. Report cards are distributed at the end of each marking period. Parents must participate in a parent/teacher conference at the end of the first marking period; at which time, they will receive the report card. Parents should review the reports with their child and call the school guidance office if there are any questions concerning these reports. Parental involvement is crucial when improving scholar academic performance. Report cards serve a significant function in school/home communication. Report cards will not be issued to scholars with continued low academic performance. In this case the parent must schedule to pick up the report card from the teacher.

### **PowerSchool Parent Portal**

The Irvington Board of Education offers parents/guardians secured access to its “PowerSchool Parent Portal”, which allows real time web access to your child’s educational progress. The Parent Portal provides parents/guardians with access to their child’s attendance and grades. Irvington Public Schools PowerSchool Parent Portal can be accessed via the PowerSchool Parent Portal link on Irvington Public Schools website: <http://www.irvington.k12.nj.us>. Please contact the Guidance Counselor to obtain your secure access code.

### **Parent-Teacher Conference**

The staff at Mt. Vernon Avenue Elementary School seeks to collaborate with parents to maximize opportunities for every child to be successful. A parent-staff conference will be requested by the school when a scholar is encountering academic problems, behavior problems, or a combination of both.

In order for home and school to work more effectively for the education and training of the scholars, a mandatory parent conference is scheduled in December. During Open House in September, parents will be given the opportunity to meet with the administration, classroom teachers, and specialists who will be interacting with their children. There will also be an opportunity to schedule an appointment for the December conferences. Prior to the conference, parents will receive a confirmation letter. Additional conferences may be initiated either by the parent or the teacher when either deems it advisable. Any time a conference is needed, an appointment must be made in advance so that all concerned may plan their time accordingly. These conferences may be arranged through the guidance counselor’s office, unless it is more convenient for both parties to do otherwise.

### **Classroom Visitation or School Events Observation**

If you would like to observe a lesson or activity in progress that includes your child, please call the main office at least one day (24 hours) in advance. The principal will arrange for your observation with the staff member. When observing, please remember that you are there to observe. Recording devices are not permitted, nor is the transcript of the lesson or activity. As this is a time during which the staff member is engaged in his/her responsibilities, it is not an appropriate time to try to engage the staff member in conversation. If you’d like a parent-teacher conference, we would be more than pleased to arrange for one another time. The length of the observation will be limited to one instructional period.

## IV. SCHOOL PROCEDURES, POLICIES, AND REGULATIONS

### Attendance

The Board of Education of the Irvington Public Schools charges the principal of the school with the responsibility for requiring compliance with school law. The New Jersey Statutes Titles 18A:38-25, 18A:38-26, and 18A:38-31, state that: “Every parent, guardian or other person having custody and control of a child between the ages of 6 and 16 years, shall cause such child to regularly attend the public school....Such regular attendance shall be during all the days and hours that the public schools are in session, unless it is shown to the satisfaction of the Board of Education...that the bodily condition of the child is such as to prevent his or her attendance...A parent...who shall fail to comply with any of the provisions...shall be deemed a disorderly person and shall be subject to a fine....”

Attendance to school is crucial for success and is the responsibility of both the scholar and the parent. However, we realize that occasionally scholars will be unable to attend school for legitimate reasons. Scholars are not entitled to any unexcused absences. A parent/guardian providing a written notice as to why a scholar was absent does not make the absence excusable. The attendance secretary will review all notes and deem if they meet the district’s criteria of excused absences. At which time, legal proceedings as required by the district will begin.

Examples of unexcused absences include:

- Absence due to parental/scholar neglect -- overslept, etc.
- Visiting a family member
- Truancy -- cutting of classes and scheduled periods.

When an absence is excused, the frequency of absences is still a concern. Therefore, verification may be required when a scholar accumulates excessive absences. Additional administrative contact may be made with the parent/guardian and/or medical/professional.

### Absence Procedure

The parent/guardian must call the attendance office between the hours of 7:40 a.m. – 8:25 a.m. and provide the reason and the approximate length of absence. If no one answers, a message may be left and the secretary will obtain the information. If a scholar is absent and a phone call has not been received, a call will be placed to the parent. The school must have reliable and current phone access to a parent/guardian at all times and in a case of an emergency. Please update scholar records when changes occur.

When a child is absent from school, a note from the parent or legal guardian explaining the “excused” reason should be given to the scholar’s homeroom teacher upon return. **In the event a child is absent three or more consecutive days, a doctor’s note must be submitted to the school nurse upon the return of the child.**

While the school accepts documentation explaining the absence, the NJ Department of Education only recognizes five allowable reasons for an absence: Religious observance (N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(h)); A college visit (up to 3 days per school year, only for students in grades 11 and 12); “Take Our Children to Work Day” (pursuant to the memo issued by the

Commissioner to all districts on April 25, 2017) or other rule issued by the Commissioner; Participation in observance of Veterans Day (N.J.S.A. 18A: 36-13.2) or district board of election membership activities (N.J.S.A. 18A: 36-33); or the closure of a busing district that prevents a student from having transportation to the receiving school. Please visit the NJDOE's website on how school districts are required to report student absences at <https://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/attendance/ChronicAbsenteeismGuidance.pdf>.

If a child is expected to be absent for a prolonged period of time, the school must be notified as to the length and reason. Arrangements should be made to receive homework for the child by contacting the guidance office.

- Scholar attendance is closely monitored by homeroom teachers and guidance counselors.
- Chronic truancy problems will be referred to the attendance office for appropriate court action, commencing with the fifth unexcused absence from school. Scholar attendance is also one of the areas considered when determining the promotion or retention of a scholar at the end of the year.
- Scholars must be present in school for a legal attendance day in order to participate in an activity on that day. Failure to be present in school will jeopardize participation.
- Scholars are reminded that in order to participate in athletic and extra/co-curricular activities, they must be present in school on the day of each planned activity.

### **Arrival Procedures**

Scholars are not permitted to enter the building until 7:30 am. Do not leave your child unattended outside of the building prior to 7:30 am. No staff member is available at this time to supervise your child. The proper authorities will be called if you are caught violating this policy. For the safety of all our scholars, parents are not permitted to remain in the cafetorium during drop-off. You may escort your child to their table and then exit the building. Please do not wait in the cafetorium for extended periods of time as you will be asked to leave.

- Kindergarten through grade 2 are to be seated at their assigned tables in the cafetorium
- Scholars in grades 3 – 5, must line up at their assigned area inside the gate by the playground area and wait to be escorted into the building.

#### **Inclement Weather Arrival Procedure**

- Kindergarten through grade 2 are to be seated at their assigned tables in the cafetorium
- Scholars in grades 3 – 5 are to line up at their assigned space in the gymnasium.

### **Dismissal Procedures**

**Scholars are dismissed at 2:50 pm** unless otherwise notified or they participate in an after-school activity. Parents are responsible for ensuring their children are picked up from school at 2:50 pm. The proper authorities (i.e. Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP)) will be notified for scholars who are habitually picked up late from school. There is an after-care program available in the building managed by Christian Pentecostal Church for scholars until 6:00 pm. Parents must arrange after-care with Christian Pentecostal at (973) 399-0004.

- Kindergarten through grade 2 are to be seated at their assigned tables in the cafetorium
- Scholars in grades 3 – 5, must line up at their assigned area inside the gate by the



playground area and wait to be escorted into the building.

### **Inclement Weather Arrival Procedure**

- Kindergarten through grade 2 are to be seated at their assigned tables in the cafetorium
- Scholars in grades 3 – 5 are to line up at their assigned space in the gymnasium.

### **Tardy**

#### ***A student is marked tardy at 8:35 am.***

Prompt arrival to school is vital to reinforcing responsibility of scholars and maintaining compliance with state law. The courts recognize three (3) tardies as one (1) absence. Children must be in school and in class on time. Scholars reporting to school after 9:00 am. must be escorted into the building by a parent/guardian. Any scholar arriving after 8:45 must report to the main security desk and sign the tardy acknowledgement log. Failure to comply will result in the following:

- A phone call to parent/guardian
- Detention during their lunch period. Failure to attend detention will result in a Home for Parent (HFP).
- Referral to Board of Education’s truancy officer (repeat offenders)

Excuses received from a parent/guardian on the same day of the late arrival help the staff understand that circumstances were beyond the scholar’s control, but it does not excuse their lateness.

### **Unexcused Absences**

Unexcused absences from school or class result in missed instructional time. Scholars who establish a history of absences (excused or illegal) may be required to produce medical verification for subsequent absences.

**NOTE:** A scholar who has 10 or more cumulative absences will be considered truant, referred to a court program as required by NJ Administration Office of Courts and will be subject to proceedings under the compulsory attendance laws.

In Grades K-8, when a scholar exceeds the limit of the 20 absences permitted, the building principal has the authority to retain the scholar or to require completion of specified academic responsibilities before promotion is granted.

### **Early Dismissal/Appointments**

Early dismissal ends at 2:30 pm.

Additionally, no child shall be permitted to leave school except:

- In case of injury or sickness.
- When accompanied by his/her parent or guardian after said person has signed for the child in the sign-out book.

The procedures to be followed for early dismissal are as such:

- Send a written request to your child's guidance counselor with the child, giving a specified date and time that you will be picking the child up.

- A pass will be given to the scholar. This pass will state the reason for leaving and the departure time.
- At the stated time, the scholar should show the pass to the classroom teacher and report to the main office.
- When the parent/guardian arrives to pick up the scholar, the parent/guardian will sign the child out of the building at the security desk.
- Upon the scholar's return to school, a note from the doctor or dentist office verifying the appointment must be submitted to the nurse's office.
- If returning to school the same day after keeping an appointment, the scholar must first report to the main office, where he/she will receive an admission pass.

Only a parent/guardian may dismiss a scholar early; unless the parent has been identified on the child's emergency information, individuals who may act on their behalf, then that individual can retrieve the child early. Please note individuals noted as "emergency contacts" are not considered to be a parent/guardian. Parents/guardians must present proper photo identification to insure the safety of our scholars.

Parents/guardians **must meet the child at the security desk in the main lobby and sign the early dismissal sign-out book.** Children are not to be picked up from the front of the building, but **MUST** be signed out. If a note was not received prior to dismissal, teachers will release the scholar only when requested to do so by the main office. Children of separated or divorced parents/guardians will be released to either parent/guardian except in the case of a court order, which specifies which parent/guardian has custody. **A copy of a court order must be on file in the child's folder.**

## Visitors Policy

Parents and guardians are welcome to visit the school at any time. They may visit with teachers at pre-arranged times. Additionally, they may meet with administrators by appointment, or if the administrator is available at the time of their visit. Your child's team of educators can only be available for scholar learning during instructional periods.

### Types of Visits

- a. **Meeting with teacher** – The teacher will confirm the appointment and teacher will meet the visitor in the main office.
- b. **Visit the class** – The teacher will confirm the appointment and office staff will wait for a security guard or paraprofessional to escort the visitor to the requested class. The teacher will call for security to escort the visitor back to the main office or security desk at the conclusion of the class visit. **Parents/Guardians who desire to observe a class must make arrangements with the classroom teacher 24 hours prior to the requested visit.** The teacher and/or parent/guardian should confirm the visit with the Principal.
- c. **Meet with a student** – Office staff will ask about the nature of the visit and call the teacher to send the student to the office with a pass.
- d. **Outside agency** request to visit or sign out student - ID must be produced and copied. Contact administrator for permission to proceed.

- e. **Sign a student out** – The office staff will inform the teacher and request that the student be released to the office for dismissal. The visitor must sign the student out in the Student Sign Out book.

**For the protection of our scholars:**

- The main entrance (Mt. Vernon Avenue) will remain our only entrance into the school from the hours of 8:25am – 2:45pm.
- Presentation of valid identification upon entering the building is mandatory.
- The security guard will take your ID and input your information on our login.
- You will sign your name after he/she has done so.
- You must report to the main office to receive a pass for a scheduled visit to the classroom.
- Under no circumstances can you just walk to the classrooms!

**Transfer Procedures**

The Guidance Office must be notified if a pupil is transferring from the school district. A transfer request can only be made by the parent/guardian; this must be done in-person. After completing a transfer form request, the parent should submit it to the Register Secretary. A Transfer Clearance Sheet (TCS) will be issued to the scholar for teachers and personnel to sign. A signature indicates that all school obligations have been met. This should be completed on or before the last day of attendance. A transfer paper for the new school district will be issued to the parent on the last day of attendance at Mt. Vernon Ave. Elementary School, provided that all financial obligations have been satisfied.

**Parent Information**

Update Each September, an information packet is sent home for parents to complete. It is necessary to return the packet as soon as possible so that the school can update scholars' records. The packet includes the following information: personal information, medical information, a field trip permission slip, emergency information, an internet permission slip, and a press image release form. Scholars will not be issued their first cycle report cards unless an updating sheet is on file. Any scholar who does not return this packet in a timely manner will receive a Home for Parent letter until it is returned.

**Notification of Change of Status**

If you plan to change your address or phone number, please notify the register secretary at 973-399-6875 Ext. 1414 immediately. This information is vital in case of emergency.

**Medication Policy**

Administration of medication is not the responsibility of the school. All requests for the administration of prescription medications must be in the form of a written note from the doctor and parent. All prescription medication to be dispensed in the Health Office must be in the original container with the name of the scholar, medication, doctor, and the times to be administered on the container. Scholars are not permitted to carry or take medication in school. This also includes over-the-counter medicines including aspirin, cough drops, etc. If a scholar must take medication during school hours, it will be necessary to provide:

- The medication labeled by the pharmacy for the scholar.
- A statement from the private physician indicating the diagnosis of the condition for which the medication is prescribed, and the length of time during which medication should be taken.
- Written permission for dispensing medication. (Please note the time that prior doses are given if the scholar is to receive more than one dose a day).

The school does not dispense non-prescription medication. The school nurse and the parent are the only persons authorized to administer medication. Under no circumstances should scholars come to school when they are ill. For attendance purposes, scholars who do not attend classes are considered absent. The Health Office cannot provide proper treatment or care for scholars who come to school ill.

### **Required Immunizations**

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All scholars must present records of complete immunization against flu, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella for enrollment in the Irvington Public Schools. The only exceptions are scholars who present a certificate signed by a physician stating that the scholar should not receive the immunization for medical reasons for all or a specific immunization, or for religious reasons. Scholars must provide proof of immunization to the school nurse.

### **State Mandated Health Screenings**

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NJ State Law requires four mandated health screenings (tuberculosis, scoliosis, vision and hearing), which are scheduled throughout the school year. If you would prefer to take your child to your private doctor/ clinic, at your own expense, please send a signed letter to the school nurse. If we do not receive a report from your doctor by September 30, your child will be screened in school. The school medical director may accept the report of a private doctor instead of the school physical examination. If a parent wishes to have his or her child examined privately, at the parent's own expense, the school will make available the Board approved form to be filled in by the private examining physician.

### **Uniform Policy**

Irvington Public Schools has a mandatory school uniform policy, which was approved by the Board of Education and has been in effect since September 1, 2009. Mt. Vernon Avenue Elementary School will consistently enforce the Board approved uniform policy; **therefore, all scholars must adhere to this policy.**

Scholars must wear green, or yellow collar shirts/polo shirts. Plain uniform green pants, skort/skirt or dress are to be worn. Pants should be appropriately fitting and belts are to be worn, with shirts tucked in. Skorts/Skirts are required to be no shorter than three inches above the knees. Shoes are preferred, but sneakers may be worn. Jeans, tights and hoodies are not allowed. Hats, scarves, and other headgear are not permitted at any time. Shirts with any logo other than Mt. Vernon Avenue School logo are not permitted. Head coverings for religious reasons are permitted when documentation is presented.

### **Gym Uniform**

Scholars should wear their gym uniform to school on the days they have gym, as we

do not have the facilities to allow scholars to change. The gym uniform for scholars consists of: sneakers (flat bottom), white socks, yellow or green sweatshirt and yellow or green sweatpants. A Mt. Vernon Ave. T-shirt may be substituted for the sweatshirt. The gym uniform is not mandatory. Scholars may opt to wear their school uniform for gym. No jewelry should be worn during Physical Education class. Sneakers must be worn on the scholar's designated Physical Education day. Under no circumstances will scholars be allowed to wear jeans for gym class.

Parents may be asked to bring a change of clothing to school for scholars who are in violation of this policy. Repeated violation of the dress code may be viewed as defiance and appropriate disciplinary action will result.

\*Violation of the Uniform Policy may result in:  
(not listed in any specific order)

- Request to remove additional clothing/change clothes (if applicable), at which time said clothing will be confiscated
- Phone call to parent/guardian to bring change of clothes to school
- Face disciplinary actions, which could include before or after-school detention
- Mandatory parent conference

The administration will determine the appropriateness of a scholar's attire if it is in question.

Repeated dress code violations will result in a mandatory parent conference. The administrator shall have the right to access/appraise any current fashion or fad and determine appropriateness of the attire for school. These guidelines apply to all extra-curricular activities and field trips unless otherwise stated by the administrators.

### **Uniform Recycling Program**

Our children outgrow their uniforms and at times, they have extra uniforms that they no longer utilize. For this reason, this year, at Mount Vernon Avenue School, we are initiating a Uniform Recycling Program. If anyone wishes to donate any gently used or new uniforms, they can kindly give them to our Parent Coordinator, Ms. Clara Thomas (973-399-6875 Ext 1417).

### **Bringing Items to School**

The only time scholars should bring toys, games, etc. to school is when their teacher or administrator instructs them to do so (for show and tell, for example). The scholars will assume responsibility for any items brought to school.

Items that should not be brought to school include electronic games, radios, cameras, tape recorders or other equipment, money for purposes other than school related activities, cell phones with cameras & video, and jewelry. Sports equipment should also be left at home. Such belongings can be lost or broken at school presenting a liability issue for our school. All confiscated items may only be retrieved by a parent. We would appreciate your help in keeping toys and equipment at home.

### **Lost and Found**

Lost articles are kept for a reasonable length of time. A scholar should report to the school

office as soon as possible after discovering a loss. It is particularly helpful if nametags are placed on coats, lunch boxes, etc., especially for primary scholars.

### **Lost Textbooks**

It is the policy of the Irvington Board of Education that scholars are responsible for all textbooks and other non-consumable books issued to them. Scholars who lose, or who return textbooks or non-consumable materials in unusable condition, shall be assessed a fine for the replacement cost of the item.

### **Damage to School Property (Textbooks, Library Books, etc.)**

A New Jersey law (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-3) makes the parent or guardian of a scholar attending public school responsible for any damages to school property which the scholar intentionally causes. Under this law, the parent or guardian is responsible for paying damages even if the parent or guardian is not at fault in any way. All monies collected are recorded and paid to the proper fund for replacement purposes. If a lost textbook is found, money paid will be refunded.

### **Electronic Devices and Cellphone**

Scholar possession of any audio, video, or digital device, including but not limited to CD/DVD/tape players, laser pointers, radios, cellular phones, digital cameras, pagers, or any personal communication devices, on school grounds, at school sponsored activities, and while under the supervision and control of school district employees is permitted under the circumstances described herein: **Electronic devices and cell phones must be kept out of sight and turned off** during instructional and non-instructional times during the school day, including study halls, lunch periods, restrooms, recess time and passing of classes. **Usage during any situation that compromises scholar safety is strictly prohibited unless directed by a school official.**

**Unauthorized use of such devices disrupts the instructional program, distracts from the learning environment, and has the potential to compromise scholar safety. Unauthorized use of electronic devices or cell phones is grounds for confiscation of the device by school officials, and parents/guardians will be required to appear in person to retrieve any confiscated equipment during the hours of 8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m., and 3:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.**

School officials include administrators, teachers, and security officials. The school district is not liable for financial loss during the period of confiscation. Items unclaimed by the end of the school year will be considered abandoned and discarded. Use in lavatories is considered unauthorized under all circumstances at all times. Unauthorized use or illegal use (recording) of such devices will lead to disciplinary ramifications, privileges revoked immediately, and possibly legal action.

### **Fire and Emergency Drill Guidelines**

One Fire and Emergency Drills are conducted once per month for our safety. A fire could spread rapidly through several parts of our building, threatening our lives. Proper conduct of drills is an important safety measure. Follow staff directions exactly during drills. **Remember the primary rule for fire safety, as such, scholars are taught not to waste time gathering their belongings such as coats and bookbags to ensure prompt exiting of the building.** To expedite scholars

movement out of the building, please communicate the following to your children:

- Exit and enter the building in silence, so that emergency directions can be heard
- Stay in line and walk quickly
- Be alert and cooperative
- Remain with the class with whom they have left the building

The administration will consider the weather conditions as best as possible when scheduling drills.

### **Emergency School Closing Information**

Notice of school closing due to inclement weather or other reasons is announced on the following radio stations between 7:00 AM and 8:00 AM: WNBC TV – Channel 4, FOX 5 WNYW – Channel 5, WABC TV- Channel 7, and on cable television (Comcast) NEWS 12 NJ – Channel 62 and Local Access Channel 36. Parents are requested not to call the radio stations, police headquarters, or schools. The Irvington Fire Department will sound an alarm at 6:30 AM and again at 7:00 AM. This notifies the township that the school district is closed for the day. You will also be notified by our Superintendent via the School Messenger System. Please do not call the Police or Fire Department.

### **Educational Cable Access Channel 35**

The Board of Education, as part of an on-going effort to inform the community of its many programs and services, in cooperation with the local cable television franchise, offers educational cable television programming to Irvington residents. This channel presents educational information messages and programs to the community and the schools. Please turn to Channel 36 for updated school news.

### **Telephones**

Messages for scholars may be taken by the office when there is an emergency or when it is essential for a scholar to receive information. Scholars are not usually called to the phone. Since office telephones are constantly in use for school business, scholars may not use an office telephone to call home unless there is an emergency. Parents are encouraged to call teachers when they have questions. Teachers will return calls when they have planning time.

### **Birthday Observances**

Mount Vernon Avenue Elementary School acknowledges our scholars' birthday during our morning announcements. Due to allergies and dietary restrictions, food items cannot be included in the celebratory event. Should you wish to celebrate your child's birthday during the school day, please follow the guidelines below:

- Notify the classroom teacher at least 2 -3 days in advance to find out the exact count of items needed and schedule an exact day.
- Pencils, books, stickers, etc. can be brought in for distribution to scholars.
- Birthday children are not to be sent to other parts of the building to deliver birthday items to other persons or pick up siblings, relatives
- On the day that you have arranged with the teacher, drop off the birthday items to the main office by 1:00 PM. The office staff will arrange for delivery to the classroom. The birthday items will be given out late in the afternoon before dismissal (2:30 pm)

in the classroom.

- Up to one family member may attend this special birthday event (valid id must be presented)
- If you want birthday invitations delivered in class for a party out of school, you must have one per child and not to a select few. The teacher can give you the exact count. We cannot give out names and invitations to “only some scholars”, as we are an inclusive school with a focus on collaboration, friendliness and respect for others.



**Mount Vernon Avenue Elementary School**  
**2020-2021 BELL SCHEDULES Grades K-5**

**Full Day Session**

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Teacher/Student Arrival	8:25am
Morning Convocation	8:30am - 8:40
Period 1	8:41am - 9:25
Period 2	9:27am - 10:11
Period 3	10:13am - 10:57
Period 4 (K/1 Lunch)	10:59am - 11:43am
Period 5 (Gr 2 & 4 lunch)	11:45am - 12:29pm
Period 6 (Gr 3 & 5 lunch)	12:31pm - 1:15pm
Period 7	1:17pm - 2:01pm
Period 8	2:03pm - 2:47pm
Dismissal	2:50pm
Teacher Dismissal	3:05pm

**Half Day Session**

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Teacher/Student Arrival	8:25am
Morning Convocation	8:30am - 8:38am
Period 1	8:41am - 9:07am
Period 2	9:09am - 9:36am
Period 3	9:38am - 10:05am
Period 4	10:07am - 10:34am
Period 5	10:36am - 11:03am
Period 6	11:05am - 11:32am
Period 7	11:34am - 12:01pm
Period 8	12:03pm - 12:30pm
Dismissal	12:30pm

**Delayed Opening**

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Period 1	10:00am - 10:40am
Period 2	10:35am - 11:15am
Period 3	11:10am - 11:50am
Period 4 (Lunch 1)	11:45am - 12:25pm
Period 5 (Lunch 2)	12:25pm - 1:00 pm
Period 6 (Lunch 3)	1:00 pm - 1:35pm
Period 7	1:35pm - 2:10pm
Period 8	2:10pm - 2:45pm
Afternoon Homeroom/Dismissal	2:45pm - 2:50pm

### **Delayed Opening Guidelines**

- Scholars **should not arrive prior to 10:00 a.m.** Due to the weather conditions, which caused the delayed opening; there will be limited supervision available for scholars.
- Scholars must be ready to board the school bus at the exact time indicated by the transportation carrier.
- All before school programs will be cancelled. After school programs may be cancelled at the discretion of the Superintendent.
- Please do not call the Fire Department or Police Department for delayed opening information.
- The storm chains for the District and each school will be activated to announce the delayed opening.

## **V. PROGRAMS, CLUBS, and ACTIVITIES**

### **Breakfast Program**

All scholars will have an opportunity to participate in our breakfast program. Breakfast is served in the classroom. The same payment process that a scholar has for lunch will apply to the breakfast program.

### **Lunch Program**

Mount Vernon Avenue School has a closed lunch program where scholars are not allowed to leave the school premises. Lunch applications are sent home at the beginning of the year for parents to complete. All information must be answered for the application to be processed. Parents will be notified if their child qualifies for free or reduced lunch. Scholars also have the option of a “brown bag” lunch from home or purchasing the daily lunch at full price if they do not qualify for the program.

### **After-School Academic Enrichment/Skills Enhancement Program**

Mount Vernon’s after-school academic skills-enrichment program begins is for scholars in grades 2 through grade 5. The program will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:05 pm – 4:05 pm. Scholars are identified for the program based on their 2018-2019 NJSLA scores and/or reading Lexile levels. A Kindergarten – grade 2 program will be offered to students demonstrating a need for support in reading and math basic skills. Letters will be sent home to qualifying students, all others will be placed on a waiting list.

### **Celebrity Read**

Celebrity Read, coordinated by the Parent Coordinator, is an annual event at Mt. Vernon Avenue Elementary School and across the Irvington Public School District. Celebrity Read was established by the United Way of Essex and West Hudson in 1991 as a community-building initiative to diversify the United Way volunteer base while inspiring elementary school children to read, dream, and set and accomplish goals. Recruited from all occupations, Celebrity Readers travel to local schools where they read a brief passage about the accomplishments of model people of color who have played an important role in American or world history.

### **Student Council**

The purpose of the Scholar Council Committee is to develop and practice attitudes of good citizenship. Members serve as role models for their peers. Scholar Council also improves scholar-teacher relationships and promotes harmonious relations throughout the entire school. In addition, the Scholar Council provides a forum for scholar expression and welcomes scholars' ideas for the school, ultimately, to improve school morale and assist in the management of school activities for scholars.

### **National Elementary Honor Society**

National Elementary Honor Society (NEHS) at Mount Vernon Avenue Elementary School is an honorary organization that serves to recognize those scholars who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of Scholarship, Leadership, Service, Character, and Citizenship. Chapter membership not only recognizes scholars for their academic accomplishments, but also challenges them to develop further through active involvement in school activities and community service.

The following principles drive the organization:

- Scholarship - the abilities and adaptedness of knowledge by learning
- Service - an act of helpful activity
- Leadership - the ability to lead, guide, and direct
- Citizenship - the character and behavior of an individual as viewed as a member of the school Character- the moral or ethical qualities within a person

### **Newsletter Club**

The Mount Vernon Avenue Newsletter Club meets twice a month for one hour to publish three editions of *The Eagle*. The newsletter is distributed to scholars and parents/guardians and is published on our school website. The newsletter includes school updates, messages from clubs and activities, highlights programs, scholars, and staff, includes a calendar of upcoming events, and a message from the principal. The club is open to scholars in grades three through five. Participation in the program is based on scholar's academic performance and behavior.

### **Digital Literacy/ Technology/Photography Club**

The Mount Vernon Avenue Digital Literacy/Photography Club is aimed at providing scholars with needed 21<sup>st</sup> century technology skills for college and careers. The Club meets twice a month learning computer skills such as coding, digital media and other computer science applications. They also support our Newsletter Club in chronicling schoolwide events and activities through photography. The Digital Literacy/ Technology/ Photography Club is open to scholars in grades two through five. Participation in the program is based on scholar's academic performance and behavior.

### **Cheerleading/Step Team**

The Mount Vernon Avenue Cheerleading/Step Team promotes teambuilding, fosters active membership of the school and the community through supporting athletic events, community service events, schoolwide assemblies, and programs. The Mount Vernon Avenue Cheerleading/Step Team meets twice a month. Participation in the program is based on scholar's academic performance and behavior.

### **Basketball Club**

The Mount Vernon Avenue Basketball Club is open to both girls and boys. Like the Cheerleading/Dance Team, it promotes teambuilding, sportsmanship, discipline and fosters active membership of the school and the community. Scholars in grades four and five will have the opportunity participate in a district basketball unified game in the Spring. The Basketball Club meets twice a month. Participation in the program is based on scholar's academic performance and behavior.

### **Field Trips**

Each year scholars may have an opportunity to take one or more field trips, which are arranged to provide additional educational experiences. Parents/ Guardians must approve their child's participation by signing a permission slip. Scholar dress and behavior on field trips is expected to be exemplary. **To ensure the safety of the scholar and their peers, scholars with multiple discipline referrals, suspensions, Home for Parents (HFP), and less than 100 Class Dojo points during the marking period of the scheduled trip, will not be permitted to attend.** Each case is

looked at on an individual basis. When applicable, the school administration reserves the right to require a parent or guardian to chaperone scholars whose behavior jeopardizes the safety of others and to themselves.

### **Fundraising**

With the support of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Mount Vernon Avenue Elementary School hosts numerous school dances and other events in order to raise money for scholar activities, and incentives. Such activities include picture day, movie nights, game night, school store items, candy cells. Each scholar is asked to support fundraising efforts as they are scheduled.

### **Year End Incentives**

Scholars must earn the right to participate in the end of the year incentive activities (e.g. administrative field trips, Fun Day). Those scholars who have displayed exceptional behavior over the course of the school year will be eligible to attend the planned events. The field trip is an all-day event, depending on the venue, scholars may be required to report to school earlier than the regularly scheduled time. Please note school administration reserves the right to require a parent or guardian to chaperone scholars whose behavior jeopardizes the safety of others and to themselves.

### **Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)**

PTAs focus on what students need to be successful in their learning, including nutrition, health, school safety, physical fitness and general well-being. The PTA works with the school to ensure students are successful and that the school's culture and climate meets the needs of the its students and families. Involved parents understand the challenges schools face and become part of the solution. By developing a closer relationship with parents, student achievement improves, and the school develops a positive reputation in the community. Please contact the PTA President Garcia Olawoore at [mtvschoolpta@gmail.com](mailto:mtvschoolpta@gmail.com) to find out how you can become an active member of the PTA.

## VI. SAFETY, ORDER & DISCIPLINE

### Expectations for Scholar Behavior

Safety, order and scholar discipline are fundamental to learning at Mount Vernon Avenue Elementary School. We are guided by the belief that children receive a challenging curriculum, dedicated teachers, and proper materials in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning. As such, there is no tolerance for classroom distractions or behaviors outside of the classroom that negatively impact the school's climate. If scholars are disruptive, disrespectful or are off-task, they will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in the District's Student Code of Conduct and/or Mount Vernon Avenue policies and protocols.

1. Scholars are to prepare themselves mentally and physically for the process of learning:
  - a. be nourished, rested, clean, and properly dressed
  - b. be prepared to learn
2. Scholars are to take responsibility for their own behavior and learning both in school and at all school-related activities:
  - a. recognize that academic development is the primary purpose
  - b. complete all classwork, homework, and other assigned tasks
  - c. make appropriate decisions
  - d. accept constructive criticism as part of the learning process
  - e. accept disagreement when necessary and appropriate
  - f. accept the consequences for their actions
3. Scholars are to demonstrate respect for self and for others:
  - a. be honest, courteous, and polite
  - b. respect the opinions of others
  - c. be respectful of different cultures
  - d. settle differences peacefully and appropriately
  - e. display good sportsmanship
4. Scholars are to respect the natural and physical environment
  - a. participate in the maintenance and cleanliness of school facilities and property.
5. Scholars are to share responsibilities when working as a member of a group or team:
  - a. cooperate, contribute, and share in the work of the group
  - b. accept and assume leadership when appropriate to do so
  - c. listen to the viewpoints of others
6. Scholars are to use their time and resources in a responsible manner:
  - a. attend school regularly and on time
  - b. use learning materials and equipment appropriately
7. Scholars are to communicate appropriately with parents and school personnel regarding their needs and goals:
  - a. take time to discuss academic learning and school programs
  - b. transmit information to parents and return responses to school personnel (in a timely fashion) when appropriate
  - c. seek assistance from appropriate school personnel in time(s) of need
8. Scholars are to be responsible for meeting individual class requirements
  - a. participate actively in learning activities
  - b. follow all class rules and procedures

- c. arrive to class on time with all appropriate materials
- 9. Scholars are to work to their potential, monitor their progress, and seek help when necessary.

### **HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING POLICY (HIB)**

The Irvington Public School District will enforce a Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy in compliance with New Jersey State law P.L. 2010, Chapter 22. The Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy prohibits any gesture, any verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived characteristic such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national, origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on or off school grounds that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school and/or the rights or others. Likewise, the incident or series of incidences could result in actual or potential physical or emotional harm to the pupil or his/her property and/or creates a hostile educational environment that interferes with learning. All reported incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying will be investigated by administration and handled appropriately in accordance with state law.

Further, all bystanders will be subject to investigation and remedial/disciplinary action. Bystanders enable HIB behavior by encouraging a bully to physically attack a scholar, spreading rumors, or shunning a scholar who has been ostracized by a group.

Any scholar or scholars who retaliate against the individual who reported the original HIB incident or who falsely accuses an individual of HIB will be subject to administrative action.

All reported cases of HIB are to be referred to the building Principal or designee. Reports can be made in person, via district form posted on the website, or anonymously via phone call, email, or letter.

Cases will be investigated by the School Anti-Bullying Specialist, reviewed by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, and reported in closed session to the Board of Education each month.

The Anti-Bullying Specialist at Mount Vernon Avenue Elementary School is Chris Ann Karsen, and may be reached at (973) 399-6875 Ext. 1403.

The District Anti-Bullying Coordinator is Eileen P. Walton. Contact information for Ms. Walton is (973) 399-6897 Ext. 1823.

Further information regarding HIB can be found on the district website.

#### ***Definition of HIB: (Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying)***

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” is defined as any gesture, written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, any whether it be a single act or a series of incidents,

that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other scholars, and that: (a) reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a scholar or damaging the scholar's property, or placing a scholar in reasonable fear of emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; (b) has the effect of insulting or demeaning any scholar or group of scholars; or (c) creates a hostile educational environment at school for the scholar by interfering with a scholar's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the scholar.

### **How to Report Incidents of HIB**

Call/ or email the school Anti-Bullying Specialist, Ms. Chris Ann Karsen (973) 399-6875, ext. 1403 or email at cakarsen@irvington.k12.nj.us describing the incident(s).

### **The Investigation Process**

1. Anti-Bullying Specialist will consult with an administrator.
2. Collect and review all statements related to the incident.
3. Interview victim/offender/witnesses. (*separately*)
4. Call parents of victim and offender.
5. Set-up conferences with victim or offender and always have parents and administrators present.
6. Make notation in PowerSchool under victim and offender of all actions taken. (*meeting/phone calls/emails*)
7. Document all anonymous reports and investigate.
8. Submit all complaints against a staff member to the Principal and
9. log into PowerSchool.
10. Offer counseling to victim and offender. (Health & Social Services Coordinator (*HSSC*) or
11. Child Study Team (*CST*)) *NOTE: HSSC must see victim within 48 hours.*

### **Disciplinary Action**

1. If the case has been substantiated, an administrator will assign the appropriate level of discipline
  - 1st Offense: HFP/Parent Conference
  - 2nd Offense: 1 day Out of School Suspension
  - 3rd Offense: 2-3 days Out of School Suspension
  - 4th Offense: 5 days Out of School Suspension (*Possible Central Office intervention*)
2. Notify CST if applicable.
3. Set-up reentry meeting with parents, scholars, teacher, counselor, HSSC and CST, if applicable
4. If necessary, begin process for Intervention & Referral Services (IR&S)
5. Follow-up with counseling for victim and offender.



## Positive Behavior Supports in Schools (PBSIS)

Mount Vernon Avenue Elementary School will continue to incorporate the PBSIS program using our motto **Where Scholars Learn to SOAR! (Success, Ownership, Attitude, Respect)**. The purpose of PBSIS is to help the school create positive learning environments that lead to decreases in discipline problems, increase opportunities for all scholars to learn the use of positive proactive and practical interventions, produce socially desired behaviors, and encourage and support pro-social scholar behavior at the school wide, classroom and individual scholar levels.

The success of an educational program relies on the involvement of the entire school community: scholars, parents, and staff. The professional staff will handle routine discipline matters through: individual scholar conference, parent conference, phone calls home, teacher detentions (lunch/after school) and referrals to the assistant principals. The role of the school administration is one of support for the professional staff in disciplinary matters. Administrative staff will work with pupils, staff, and parents to resolve disciplinary issues. Scholars are to follow these clear expectations for all school areas.

Any disciplinary action taken by the administration is intended to insure the safety and welfare of everyone at Mount Vernon Avenue School and benefit the scholar through improving attitude and subsequent behavior. The disciplinary options available to the administration are regulated by law and school district policies; and are strictly enforced to maintain a safe learning environment for all. The disciplinary option chosen depends on: (1) nature of the offense, (2) the nature of the scholar's previous behavior, and (3) stated policy or precedent based on previous action.

### Disciplinary Options

It is important to note that a scholar may be suspended for conduct that he/she should have been aware of as a violation of school policy though not specifically listed in the statute. A school may also suspend a scholar for grounds where that misbehavior is detrimental to school safety, stated discipline procedures, or property. Consequences for non-compliance can include any of the following depending upon the seriousness and/or frequency of the matter: (not listed in progressive order)

Adult to pupil conference (warning)	Time out Home contacts
Parent-pupil-teacher conferences	Detention (early morning or after school)
Denial of privileges (i.e. field trips, dance, etc.)	Home for Parent (HFP)
Out of school suspension	Expulsion

Please remember that our actions involving disciplinary measures are meant to correct inappropriate school behaviors. Our goal (the school and parent's) is common: to produce happy, healthy, well-adjusted individuals who will lead successful adult lives. Please support our school's efforts to have scholars behave appropriately while at school, on a trip, and on the school bus.

## **ClassDojo**

Our schoolwide behavior and performance-tracking tool will again be implemented during the 2020-2021 school year. ClassDojo is a communication app used by our teachers allowing parents/guardians to share in their child's classroom experiences using videos, photos, and messages. Scholars earn points by demonstrating *SOAR* attributes throughout the day. Parents and guardians can access the app through a smartphone, tablet, or computer, using their email address and secure login code, provided by their child's homeroom teacher.

## **Detention**

Detention may be held by the classroom teacher before school at 7:30 a.m. or after school at 3:00 p.m. Administrative detentions are held after school for one hour two days a week or during the school day from 9:00 a.m. -11:00 a.m. Scholars must bring schoolwork to complete during detention. Scholars will be allowed to call their parents to notify them of the assigned detention.

## **Home for Parent (HFP)**

Scholars will receive a letter notifying parents that they have displayed negative behavior or did not follow expectations. Scholars must report to school the following day with a parent or guardian to meet with and administrator. Failure to report to school with a parent or guardian will result in suspension.

## **Out of School Suspension**

An out of school suspension is the temporary denial of the scholar's right to attend school. Scholars can only be suspended by the building principal or his/her designee. Each suspension shall be reported to the scholar's parent and the Superintendent of Schools, who shall report the suspension to the Board of Education. Parents have the responsibility of guaranteeing that the scholar remains in the confinement of the home during the time of suspension. A parent conference with an administrator is necessary for a scholar's re-admittance to school. Scholars are required to make up all missed work. All assignments will be provided, and it is expected that the scholar will complete work while at home. Assignments must be returned upon scholar's re-admittance to school.

## **Expulsion**

Expulsion is the denial of the scholar's right to attend public school and may be imposed solely by the Board of Education. A scholar may appeal an expulsion decision of the Board of Education to the Commissioner of Education and State Board of Education. A prerequisite to any board action for expulsion of a non-handicapped scholar is referred to the district's child study team for preliminary determination. The purpose of this evaluation is to determine whether the scholar's misbehavior arises from a handicapping condition.

## **Physical Restraint**

In accordance with state law, physical restraint or reasonable force may be used for the following reasons:

- To quell a disturbance
- To obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects.

- For the purpose of self-defense.
- For the protection of persons or property.

The administration reserves the right to skip the sequence of disciplinary options as outlined in this section if the offense so warrants.

## CONDUCT VIOLATIONS & CONSEQUENCES

Examples of Conduct Violations	Definition	Minimum Level	Maximum Level
<b>Chronic Lack of Supplies</b>	Repeatedly reporting to class without necessary materials such as books, physical education attire, supplies, etc.	1	2
<b>Cutting Class</b>	Failing to attend scheduled class and/or arriving to class at least ten (10) minutes beyond the scheduled start time without a valid pass.	1	3
<b>Defacement of School Property</b>	Participating in activity that results in substantial destruction or disfigurement of school property that is not the result of accidental behavior.	1	3
<b>Dishonesty / Forging / Cheating</b>	Delivering message that is untrue (verbal or written), producing a forged school document (e.g., pass), turning in academic work produced by other scholars as their own, plagiarizing/cheating.	1	3
<b>Disruption</b>	Causing an interruption in a class or activity, which may include sustained loud talking, yelling or screaming, making noises with materials; horseplay or roughhousing, and/or sustained out-of-seat behavior.	1	3
<b>Entering School Grounds Without Permission</b>	Trespassing on school property during or outside of regular hours of building operation and/or during out of school suspension without permission.	1	3
<b>Failure to Comply with Administrative Detention</b>	Failing to attend administrative detention, arriving more than ten (10) minutes after the scheduled start time, or leaving administrative detention without permission.	1	3
<b>Failure to Comply with Teacher Detention</b>	Failing to attend teacher detention, arriving more than ten (10) minutes after the scheduled start time, or leaving teacher detention without permission.	1	2
<b>Food Fighting</b>	Deliberately throwing food or beverages	2	3
<b>Gang Related Activity</b>	Wearing of clothing or jewelry associated with a gang and/or using written, verbal or gestures that are symbolic of gang signs, or other indicators of gang related activity.	1	4
<b>Harassment / Intimidation / Bullying</b>	Intentionally delivering threatening messages, real or implied,(verbal, gestural, or textual) to another person with the intent of causing hurt or harm, or which has the effect of causing a disruption to the orderly operation of the school.	1	4
<b>Inappropriate Dress</b>	Dressing in a manner that interferes with the teaching and learning of others. Scholars must wear appropriate attire as determined by administration.	1	2

\*(Level 1 – Conference) (Level 2 – Intervention) (Level 3 –Suspension Short term 1-4 days/long term 10 days – pending expulsion hearing) (Level 4 – Expulsion) Refer to pages 53-56 for definitions of levels.

## CONDUCT VIOLATIONS & CONSEQUENCES

Examples of Conduct Violations	Definition	Minimum Level	Maximum Level
<b>Lacking Supervision / Loitering</b>	Wandering in the hallway without permission; leaving a designated area without permission or supervision; remaining in the hallway after allotted transition time; and/or if a student is in an unauthorized area of the building without permission (e.g., storage room).	1	3
<b>Leaving Class Without Permission</b>	Leaving class without permission.	1	3
<b>Misuse of School Equipment</b>	Using school equipment without permission and/or without following instructions.	1	2
<b>Non-compliance / Defiance / Disrespect</b>	Refusing to follow directions, talking back, or engaging in socially rude interactions toward staff and/or scholars that include negative verbal statements or gestures.	1	3
<b>Obscene / Inappropriate Language / Materials</b>	Verbalizing or writing messages, and/or making gestures that include swearing, name-calling, profanity, and/or explicit messages of a violent nature.	1	3
<b>Physical Aggression</b>	Delivering actions that involve substantial physical contact toward another where injury may occur (e.g. hitting, punching, hitting with an object, kicking, hair pulling, scratching, etc.).	2	4
<b>Possession or Use of Tobacco Products</b>	Possessing or using tobacco products while on school property or in attendance at school-sponsored events.	1	4
<b>Possession of Unsafe Objects / Materials</b>	Possessing an item that can potentially place them or others at risk for injury. Examples include sharp objects, items that may be construed as weapons and toxic substances. This definition applies even if the student has not used the item in an unsafe manner or has not threatened to use the item. Devices that contain combustible material (snaps, “stink bombs”, jumping jacks, firecrackers)	1	3
<b>Sexually Inappropriate Activity or Behavior / Gestures / Materials</b>	Verbalizing, writing, texting or ‘sexting’ messages, and/or Making gestures that include pornographic content, mature themes, inappropriate touching, solicitation, and/or explicit messages of a sexual nature.	1	4
<b>Theft</b>	Removing someone else’s property without that person’s permission. (Student may have said item or may have passed identified item on to another).	1	3
<b>Tardiness to Class</b>	Failing to arrive to class at the scheduled start time without a pass or permission.	1	2

\*(Level 1 – Conference) (Level 2 – Intervention) (Level 3 –Suspension Short term 1-4 days/long term 10 days – pending expulsion hearing) (Level 4 – Expulsion) Refer to pages 53-56 for definitions of levels

## CONDUCT VIOLATIONS & CONSEQUENCES

Examples of Conduct	Definition	Minimum	Maximum
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Violations		Level	Level
<b>Tardiness to School</b>	Failing to arrive to school at the scheduled start time and/or arrives late to school without permission.	1	2
<b>Throwing Objects</b>	Deliberately throwing or tossing objects.	1	3
<b>Truancy</b>	Failing to report to school without prior permission, knowledge or excuse by the school or parent. Leaving school without permission.	1	2
<b>Use of an Electronic Device</b>	Using personal electronic devices such as a cell phone, MP3 players, image recorder, or electronic entertainment device at any time on school property without the expressed written permission of the school principal or noted in the IEP.	1	2

\*(Level 1 – Conference) (Level 2 – Intervention) (Level 3 –Suspension Short term 1-4 days/long term 10 days – pending expulsion hearing) (Level 4 – Expulsion) Refer to pages 53-56 for definition of levels.

## LAW RELATED VIOLATIONS & CONSEQUENCES

Examples of Conduct Violations	Definition	Minimum Level	Maximum Level
<b>Arson</b>	Intentionally starting, or attempting to start a fire or combustion.	3	4
<b>Assault</b>	Causing or attempting to cause bodily injury to another person. Assault includes an attempt by physical menace to put another in fear of imminent serious bodily injury.	3	4
<b>Bias Incident</b>	Acting, at least in part, with ill will, hatred or bias with a purpose to intimidate an individual or group of individuals because of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity.	1	4
<b>Bombs/Explosives</b>	Possessing or using a device containing combustible material and/or a fuse, including fireworks.	3	4
<b>Burglary</b>	Unauthorized entrance into a school District building (unoccupied) with the intent of committing a criminal act when the building is closed to the scholars and the public.	3	4
<b>Computer Violations</b>	Stealing computer hardware or software, reproducing unauthorized information (fraud), viewing or obtaining pornography or sexually explicit materials, introducing computer viruses, threatening /menacing, sending or receiving hate materials, committing a bias offense, harassing, 'sexting' (sending sexually explicit messages/photos electronically).	3 3 3 3 1 1 1 2	4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4
<b>Disorderly Conduct</b>	Behaving in a violent or seriously inappropriate manner, which disrupts the educational process. (NOTE: This category is used when the police are called to cite a student for extreme disruption).	3	4
<b>Drug/Alcohol/Chemical Use (NJSA 18A:40A-12(a))</b>	Using any controlled substance, intoxicant or alcohol or substance alleged to be a drug regardless of its content. (Mandated HSSC Intervention)	2	4

<b>Drug/Alcohol/Chemical Possession (NJSA18:40-1011;NJAC:29-6.3(c) (2)</b>	In possession of any controlled substance, alcohol or intoxicant includes transfer of a prescription drug or substance alleged to be a drug regardless of its actual content. (Mandated HSSC Intervention)	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Drug/Alcohol/Chemical Sale/Distribution(NJSA 18:40A-10, 1NJAC:29-6.3(c) (2)</b>	Selling of any controlled substance, alcohol, intoxicant or prescription drug or substance alleged to be a drug regardless of its actual content. (Mandated HSSC Intervention)	<b>4</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Possession of Drug Paraphernalia:</b>	In possession of pipes, rolling papers, needles or other paraphernalia.	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

\*(Level 1 – Conference) (Level 2 – Intervention) (Level 3 –Suspension Short term 1-4 days/long term 10 days – pending expulsion hearing) (Level 4 – Expulsion) Refer to pages 53-56 for definition of levels.

### **LAW RELATED VIOLATIONS & CONSEQUENCES (Police may be called.)**

<b>Examples of Conduct Violations</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Minimum Level</b>	<b>Maximum Level</b>
<b>Extortion</b>	Using threats or intimidation to demand money or something of value from another.	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>False Fire Alarm/Bomb Threat</b>	Reporting a fire to school or fire officials or intentionally setting off a fire alarm or fire extinguisher without a reasonable belief that a fire exists or making statements that a bomb is on the premises.	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Gambling</b>	Playing any game of skill or chance for money or anything of value.	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Robbery</b>	Taking property from a person by force, violence or threat of immediate bodily injury.	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Sexual Assault/ Offenses</b>	Participating in intentional sexual contact of a harmful or offensive nature.	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Terrorist Threats</b>	a.) Committing a crime of violence with the purpose to terrorize another or to cause evacuation of a building, place of assembly, or facility of public transportation, or otherwise to cause serious public inconvenience. b.) Threatening to kill another with the purpose of putting him in imminent fear of death under circumstances reasonably causing the victim to believe the immediacy of the threat and the likelihood that it will be carried out (Both of these terrorist threats are crimes of the third (3 <sup>rd</sup> ) degree).	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Stealing/Extortion/Fraud</b>	Unlawful taking and carrying away of property belonging to another person with the intent to deprive the lawful owner of its use.	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Threatening/Menace</b>	With criminal intent, the act of threatening to strike, attack or harm any person in school or at any sponsored or supervised activity, including the use of internet websites and electronic devices.	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Vandalism/Graffiti</b>	Willfully or maliciously destructing or defacing public or private property belonging to another. Parents/guardians will be held liable for damages and the district will seek appropriate restitution.	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>

<b>Weapons &amp; Dangerous Instruments</b>	Possessing or using an instrument that can cause bodily harm.; including mace, knives, razors, clubs, metal knuckles, nunchuks, laser lights, or any other object used or intended to be used to inflict bodily harm.	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Examples of Conduct Violations</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Minimum Level</b>	<b>Maximum Level</b>
<b>Firearms</b>	Possessing, using, or threatening to use a firearm on school property, on a school bus or other contracted transportation service, or at a school-sponsored function. A firearm is defined as any handgun, rifle, shotgun, machine gun, automatic or semi-automatic rifle, or any gun, device or instrument in the nature of a weapon from which may be fired or ejected any solid projectable ball, slug, pellet, missile or bullet, or any gas, vapor or other noxious thing, by means of a cartridge or shell or by the action of an explosive or the igniting of flammable or explosive substances. It shall also include, without limitation, any firearm which is in the nature of an air gun, spring gun or pistol or other weapon of a similar nature (including BB guns and pellet guns) in which the propelling force is a spring elastic band, carbon dioxide, compressed or other gas or vapor, air or compressed air, or is ignited by compressed air, and ejecting a bullet or missile smaller than three eighths of an inch in diameter, with sufficient force to injure a person.	<b>4</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Other Pellet Guns &amp; BB Guns</b>	Possessing, using, or threatening to use a pellet gun, BB gun, or any other facsimile thereof, which ejects a projectile of three-eighths (3/8) of an inch or more in diameter, on school property, on a school bus or other contracted transportation service, or at a school sponsored function A pellet gun is defined as a gun, which uses compressed air or carbon dioxide to propel a projectile. A BB gun uses the same compressed air or carbon dioxide to propel a copper plated sphere, known as a BB.	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Paintball Guns</b>	Possessing, using, or threatening to use a paintball gun on school property, school buses or other contracted transportation services. Paintball guns use compressed air to propel large diameter paint filled projectiles.	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Toy Guns and Imitation Firearms</b>	Possessing, using, or threatening to use a toy gun or imitation gun on school property, school buses, or other contracted transportation services.	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>

\*(Level 1 – Conference) (Level 2 – Intervention) (Level 3 –Suspension Short term 1-4 days/long term 10 days – pending expulsion hearing) (Level 4 – Expulsion) Refer to pages 53-56 for definition of levels.

## If...

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1. You have a question, which is not answered in this book, ask your homeroom or classroom teacher for assistance.
2. You have been absent, report to your homeroom teacher with a written note from your parent/guardian.
3. You have been absent for more than three days, you must see the school nurse before you will be admitted to school.
4. You are going to be excused for a religious observance, you must bring a note from your parent/guardian.
5. You are tardy to school, you must sign in at the front desk and obtain an admittance pass.
6. You lose something, check in the Main Office or the Lost and Found area.
7. You need help in a subject, talk it over with your teacher or the guidance counselor.
8. You need to leave the classroom, you must have permission from the teacher, and you must have a hall pass.
9. You need to see the Nurse, you must have a pass to the Nurse's office.
10. You are not sure of an assignment, check with your teacher before you leave school or call upon a "study buddy" from your class.
11. You want to join a club or take part in an after-school activity, contact the teacher in charge or sign up at any meeting. Listen to announcements for meeting dates and times.



## Formal Acknowledgment of 2020-2021 Handbook Receipt and Review

We, the undersigned, understand that this handbook contains important information for parents, guardians, and scholars for our review. We acknowledge that we have received a copy of the 2020-2021 Mt. Vernon Avenue Elementary School Parent and Scholar Handbook. We have reviewed the information and the policies contained in this handbook.

We understand that all scholars will be held accountable for their behavior and that failure to abide by the guidelines for scholar behavior can result in the disciplinary measures outlined in this handbook.

We understand that failure to return this acknowledgment does not excuse any individual from being held accountable to the district and/or school policies, practices and guidelines.

We are aware that Mt. Vernon administration reserves the right at any time to amend the policies, and guidelines as long as they remain aligned to district policies, practices and guidelines contained or referred to in this handbook. We are also aware that the 2020-2021 handbook is accessible online at <http://irvington.k12.nj.us/schools/mount-vernon/>.

Directions for return of this form throughout the 2020-2021 school year:

Tear out this page from the handbook and return to your homeroom teacher by September 24, 2019. New and transfer scholars registering after the start of the school year must return this acknowledgment page within one week after receipt. The homeroom teacher must maintain this document in the scholar's folder.

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2020-2021 Mount Vernon Avenue Elementary School  
Parent Scholar Handbook Acknowledgment of Receipt

Scholar's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_