

# **ABCs of Chatsworth School Programs, Policies and Guidelines**

## **AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS**

The Chatsworth PTA sponsors a variety of after school enrichment programs on a non-profit tuition basis. There are two sessions offered – fall and spring. A listing of activities offered is sent home with your child twice a year prior to the session. Scholarships, based on financial need, are available on a confidential basis by contacting the school social worker.

## **ALLERGY POLICY**

The school will work together with each family to ensure that classrooms and lunchrooms remain safe and healthy environments for all students. Parents of children with severe allergies must keep the school fully informed about their child's condition. If your child is limited in the foods that he or she can eat, please provide a document from your child's physician with specific details of your child's condition and food requirements. The documentation must be in a form that is easily used by the school administration, the nurse, the classroom teacher and the other families in the class. The school will assist families in the distribution of this information to the families in your child's class.

## **ART**

All students have art as part of their curriculum. Art experiences provide elementary students with an opportunity to combine reality and fantasy; to make statements about themselves and their world; to examine their environment and express the results of that examination in a variety of media. Art activities are geared to serve the needs of all elementary students and not a select group. The art program consists of regularly scheduled art classes for all grades. Children are exposed to areas of drawing, painting, sculpture, constructions, collage, printing, crafts and mixed media.

## **BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHTS**

Back to School Nights are held in the early fall. The district calendar lists the specific dates and specific times for your child's grade. These evening programs offer parents the opportunity to meet their child's teacher and to learn about the curriculum in the coming year. **Children do not attend Back to School Nights.**

## **BICYCLES, SKATEBOARDS AND SCOOTERS**

- According to the Board of Education policy, no child below fourth grade may ride and/or park a bicycle on school grounds during school hours. The New York State law requires all bicycle riders under the age of 14 to wear helmets.
- Bicycles parked on school grounds are the owner's responsibility. The school regrets that it cannot be responsible for missing property. All bicycles should be locked to the bike racks. Bike racks are located on the side of the school near the driveway and next to the playground.
- Skateboards and scooters are prohibited at all times on school grounds.

## **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Mamaroneck Union Free School District is governed by the Board of Education, composed of seven community members, all volunteers, who are elected to three-year terms. Since the board's decisions directly affect your child's education, parents are urged to attend school board meetings whenever possible. The meetings are also televised on LMC-TV, Channel 71, 72 and 73.

- Public school board meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month in the High School's Post Road Conference Center. The community is invited to sign up to address the board at this time.
- The time and place of school board meetings are listed on the district calendar.
- In addition, other Tuesday evenings are devoted to informal meetings of the board called study sessions, which are also open to the public but without public input. These meetings are not televised.
- One Tuesday evening every month is set aside for board hours. This is a time when you can make an appointment to meet with individual board members privately.
- Study sessions, board hours and any changes or additional meetings are announced in the newspaper and in your school bulletin.
- Board Briefs is a published bulletin sent home with your children that summarized the board meeting minutes.

## **BOOK FAIR**

The Chatsworth PTA holds two book fairs each year. Specific dates are included on the district calendar. They are sponsored by the PTA as a fundraiser as well as an important means of instilling a love for books and reading in our children. Classes visit the Book Fair during school hours. You can send money with your child or meet your child during their designated class time. A class schedule is printed in the school bulletin the prior week. The book fairs are staffed by parent volunteers and are open before and after school, including some evenings.

## **CABLE TELEVISION**

LMC-TV, Larchmont-Mamaroneck Community Television, airs on Channels 71, 72 and 73. There may be programs about our schools that will be publicized in the weekly bulletin. For further information you can call LMC-TV at 698-6808. If you know of an interesting story or have a videotape, or if you wish to view a previously aired program, please call the Public Information Director at 220-3000.

Occasionally, the district may film or photograph children in classes. Be assured that teachers will usually know in advance, and we do not anticipate any disruption in classes. Children may also be taped or photographed without prior notice on the playground, at a performance, in the lunchroom or in the halls. If you do not wish your child to appear in a video or photograph, you will be informed of the option by the Public Information Director.

## **CALENDAR**

The Mamaroneck Union Free School District publishes a district-wide school calendar that is sent home in August. Look for specific Chatsworth dates and scheduling information in the weekly bulletin sent home each Friday.

## **CHAT**

Chat, sponsored by the Chatsworth PTA, is Chatsworth's literary magazine, which publishes articles, poetry and stories written by students in all grades. Each child may have one piece printed in the magazine. Student editors from our 5<sup>th</sup> grade volunteer to help parent volunteers organize the project. A copy of Chat is given to each student in June.

## **CHATSWORTH CARNIVAL**

The Carnival is the PTA's major community event of the year and is held during the month of May. Everyone joins in and participates to their fullest. Carnival is an experience enjoyed by all members of the Chatsworth community. Look for the specific date on the district calendar.

## **CHILD CARE – CHILDREN'S CORNER**

Children from Chatsworth, along with children from other Mamaroneck elementary schools, are eligible to participate in Children's Corner, a before and after-school child care program. The morning supervision is provided at Chatsworth by children's Corner employees. Afternoon programs take place at the Hommocks Middle School. Children's Corner (834-0022) is a non-profit program separate from the school system. Children have opportunities for active and quiet, indoor and outdoor, independent and small group play. Activities include art, reading, doing homework, homework help, cooking, sports, games and special events. The following hours are available:

- Before school from 7:40 a.m. to 8:40 a.m. Quiet games and projects are provided as well as homework help. This is located at Chatsworth for Chatsworth students.
- 11:45 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. On Wednesday, it is open from 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Children are bused to the program at the Hommocks Middle School from Chatsworth.
- The program is also open on conference days, half days and some holidays.
- Children's Corner is **not open** in the event of an emergency or early dismissal.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Ongoing communication between parents and school often helps to solve problems before they become serious, and to validate or dispel rumors. Please do not hesitate to call. Whenever possible, speak first to the person closest to the situation. If unable to help you, that person will refer you to the correct individual. If you have a general question about the district, and don't know whom to ask, call the public information office at 220-3000.

## **COMMUNITY DONATIONS**

The Community Donations Committee of the Chatsworth PTA coordinates the year round collection and distribution of new school supplies, toys and books for needy children in the community. Additionally, the committee runs a fall coat drive and a holiday toy drive. Look for more information about donation drives in the district calendar and weekly bulletin.

## **CONFERENCES**

Conferences between parents and teacher can strengthen the parent and teacher relationship and benefit your child. Conferencing gives parents and teachers (without the child present) an opportunity to meet and discuss how the child has been doing during the year. Conferences are scheduled in the fall and the spring for grades 1-5. In Kindergarten there is one fall intake meeting with the classroom teacher and a spring conference during the regular conference period.

Several afternoons have been set aside for parent-teacher conferences. The children will be dismissed at 11:30 a.m. on two of these days. The dates and times are listed on the district calendar and the Chatsworth monthly calendar. More information on scheduling conferences will come from your child's teacher.

## **CULTURAL ENRICHMENT**

The Cultural Enrichment Committee of the Chatsworth PTA arranges for educationally enriching programs and workshops. The programs vary from year-to-year as the committee, working with faculty, searches for quality presentations and programs that will enhance the cultural lives of students. Check for updates in the weekly bulletin.

## **DIRECTORY/DATABASE**

The Chatsworth PTA provides a school directory that includes class lists plus an alphabetical listing of all students.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Trips are scheduled by classroom teachers throughout the year to enrich the school experience. The class teacher will send home information regarding the trip with permission forms. The school is not permitted to take children on a trip without written permission from you. Many trips scheduled throughout the year also require money to pay for admission or transportation. PTA scholarships, based on financial need, can be obtained confidentially through your classroom teacher or the school social worker. To avoid disappointment, please be sure to return **signed permission slips** and necessary money with your child to school.

## **GRANTS**

Parents are welcome to work together to develop and seek funding for new enrichment programs. Parents have successfully obtained grants for lunchtime chess and gender issues projects. Grant requests are submitted to the Mamaroneck Schools Foundation or other foundations.

## **HARRASSMENT**

Our school district is committed to providing a learning and work environment free from all forms of harassment or intimidation. It is our policy to encourage students who feel they have been subjected to harassment by adults or other students to bring this to the attention of the Chatsworth Dignity coordinator, Venessa Green-Davis, school psychologist. All complaints will be will be thoroughly investigated. The District's official policy is listed on the website under District Policies.

## **HEAD LICE PREVENTION**

It is the parent's responsibility to check their child regularly for head lice. Any child found to have head lice by the school or parent will be sent home for treatment. Upon returning to school, they must be first rechecked by the school nurse and be lice free before being permitted to their classroom. If a case of head lice is detected in the classroom, the school nurse will check other students in the class. Please consult the school nurse (220-3510) if you would like more information on head lice.

## **HEALTH FORM REQUIREMENTS**

The Mamaroneck UFSD requires the following health forms for all students:

- **Physical Examination Certificate:** As your children are preparing to enter our school, they are in need of a physical examination by their doctor or practitioner. By law, all new students and those entering grades Kg, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> must have a physical examination. Completed forms, signed and dated anytime within the last 12 months are acceptable. Your child will be examined by the school physician if we do not receive a signed and dated form.
- **Student Health Body Mass Index and Weight Status Category Reporting Form:** Effective 2008, this new law requires that each student in grades needing a physical exam submit a BMI (body mass index) and weight status category report. This form is available on the Web site. You only need to complete, sign and return this form should you NOT want your child's anonymous data released to NY State Dept of Health as part of the mandatory reporting of this information.
- **Vaccination Administration Record:** All new students, including Kindergarten must have a vaccination form completed and signed by the child's physician/practitioner. Please contact the school nurse regarding questions related to vaccination requirements. **Students will not be allowed to enter school without vaccination information.** **Child Health History Information Form:** Health history forms are requested for all students each year. The information on this form helps the school nurse ascertain the current health status of your child.
- **Tuberculin screening Form:** To be completed by your child's physician/practitioner when your child receives a skin test for tuberculosis (TST), or if your physician/practitioner feels that this test is not necessary at this time.
- **Dental Examination Certificate:** to be completed by your child's dentist for grades Kg, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.
- **Medication Permission Form:** If your child requires any medication, including over-the-counter medications, during school hours, the nurse must have a note signed by a parent/guardian, as well as a written request from your physician/practitioner. This request must include the diagnosis, and the frequency and dosage of the prescribed medication. Medication must be delivered to school in the original pharmacy labeled container with your child's name and the name of the medication. Please call your school nurse should you have any questions.

*All forms are available on the district Web site at [www.mamkschools.org](http://www.mamkschools.org) – Student Registration.*

### **INCOMING KINDERGARTEN**

Several kindergarten orientations are held during the year for the next year's incoming kindergarten class. These orientations are listed on the district calendar and the Chatsworth monthly calendar. The first orientation, for parents only, provides an overview of the school, curriculum and what to expect during the year. Parents are also given an opportunity to meet the kindergarten teachers, principal and assistant principal. At the second orientation, both parent and child are given an opportunity to visit and play in one of the kindergarten classrooms. Students return to Chatsworth for incoming Kindergarten screenings in June. Screening for Speech/Language, Vision, Hearing and general health are administered. The final orientation is held with parents on the first morning of school in the fall to review school policies and answer any remaining questions.

### **INTERNATIONAL PARENTS**

International Parents is a group, sponsored by the Chatsworth PTA, which provides information and support, often in their native language, to international parents. The Chatsworth School community has families from over 40 countries. The International Parents group also promotes multicultural awareness at Chatsworth Avenue School.

### **LIBRARY**

Each week, all children visit the Chatsworth School Library Media Center, located on the first floor of the Forest Park building. Here they find an inviting space for reading, research and reference work. A stimulating collection of books, audio-visual materials, Internet access and computers are available. Parent and community volunteers help shelve and circulate books

### **LOCKED DOORS**

The main entrance doors on the Forest Park Avenue side of the school remain open during the school day. All other school doors are locked at 9:00 AM. Visitors must enter the school at the main entrance. Visitors including parents are required to wear a Visitor's Pass at all times.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

It is very important that children come to school with **names sewn in or marked** in all their personal belongings. This includes all clothing, coats, sneakers, boots, backpacks, and lunch boxes. The Lost and Found is located inside the double doors nearest the auditorium on Forest Park Avenue. Bins have been marked and set up to make retrieving items easier. The PTA has also established a Lost and Found Retrieval program. Periodically, all items **with names** will be bagged and returned to the child's classroom. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity at the December break and after school ends in June.

## **LUNCH PROCEDURES**

1. Lunchtime is scheduled into three overlapping periods:

**11:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., 12:15-12:45, and 12:45-1:15.**

### **A. Lunch guidelines for students having lunch at school**

- i. It is the responsibility of parents to provide lunch for their children each day.
- ii. The District offers a school lunch program. Please refer to the Chatsworth website for details.
- iii. For safety reasons, children are not allowed to leave school unsupervised at lunchtime.

### **B. Role of Teacher Aides**

- i. Teacher aides are responsible for supervising the lunch period under the direction of Mrs. Boyle and Mrs. Anderson. They work together to provide a safe and orderly atmosphere. This is done with care and concern for the children in their charge.
- ii. Each grade is supervised by at least two aides who remain with the children for the entire lunch period.
- iii. Each grade is supervised by aides who remain with the children for the entire lunch period.
- iv. Please discuss the importance of the aide's role with your child. Children should know that the aides are there to help and to listen. Children should know that they must be respectful of the aide's decisions at all times.

## **MUSIC/INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAM**

All children attend General Music classes once a week. Choir is open to upper grade students and offers an opportunity for students to be part of a performing group and to develop vocal skills.

The Instrumental Music Program is a voluntary program offering string instruments (violin, viola, and cello) and band instruments (flute, clarinet, trumpet and trombone). The string program begins in the third grade, due to the availability of smaller sized instruments. Students who choose to participate in this program receive a one-half-hour-per-week small group lesson. The band program begins in the fourth grade. In the fourth and fifth grades, students receive a one-half-hour-per week small group lesson. Orchestra and band participants attend a large group ensemble rehearsal (orchestra or band) once a week at 800 a.m. – 840 a.m. (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders attend on different days). Students will participate in school concerts during the year. Students rent instruments from outside sources unless a student would otherwise be unable to play. Scholarships, based on financial need, are available on a confidential basis by contacting the band or orchestra teacher.

## **NEW FAMILIES/SCHOOL TOURS**

Volunteers from the Chatsworth PTA provide school tours for prospective residents in the Chatsworth Avenue School. Tours are set up through the school office. Families new to Chatsworth are welcomed to the community and provided with information by the PTA volunteers, administration and faculty.

### **NEWSLETTER/BULLETIN/FRIDAY SHEET**

On Fridays, a weekly bulletin is posted on the school website. You can sign up to receive the newsletter automatically through an RSS feed. The “Friday Sheet” important information on various school and PTA activities, highlights, upcoming dates and events and is a vehicle for the administration and faculty to present school issues. PTA items to be included in the weekly bulletin should be submitted to the school secretary in the school office by Wednesday morning of that week. Extra copies of the weekly bulletin are available on the PTA bulletin board outside the office.

### **PARENT’S NIGHT OUT**

The Chatsworth PTA sponsors a festive evening out for parents, teachers and staff. Many parent volunteers work to bring each year’s theme to life and it has become a wonderful Chatsworth tradition. Please consult the district calendar and the Chatsworth monthly calendar for the specific date.

### **PTA MEMBERSHIP**

All parents and teachers are encouraged to join the Chatsworth PTA. The Chatsworth PTA helps to provide support to the school through a variety of committees and activities. Its strength is derived from the active participation of parents and teachers who share a commitment to all Chatsworth students. **Please return the PTA membership form located in the Back to School Form Packet by the date on the form.**

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Physical Education is an integral and required part of the total education experience. The program at Chatsworth is child-centered and focuses on participation in physical activity. Although physical activity is the centerpiece, other unique and worthy objectives are attained through a well-planned program that offers a variety of activities and experiences. The professional staff teaches sport and movement skills integrating the concepts of health and wellness, fair play, teamwork and personal living skills, thereby nurturing a healthy and active lifestyle. **Excuses from Physical Education should be given in writing to the Physical Education teacher when the child is to miss a day. A doctor, explaining when the child can resume activities, must sign excuses for one week or more.**

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION SPECIAL ACTIVITIES**

The Physical Education Department at Chatsworth sponsors a variety of events throughout the year to promote the importance of physical fitness for both parents and children. Events such as Circus Arts and Jump Rope for Heart are some of the programs that are offered throughout the year. Look for announcements from the teachers in the weekly bulletin.

### **ROOM REPRESENTATIVES**

Each class is represented by two parent volunteers who are responsible for making phone calls when necessary, working with the teacher on class parties, etc., coordinating volunteers carnival, and communicating parent concerns/issues to grade level chairs.

## **SAFETY GUIDELINES**

Safety is a major concern around Chatsworth; therefore, in conjunction with the Larchmont Police and Fire Department, the following guidelines have been developed to help insure the safety and well-being of our children. Discuss these guidelines with your children and their caregivers. Please allow ample time for a safe arrival and dismissal.

In order to ease traffic congestion, we encourage all students to walk to school. The following guidelines should be followed

- Children should walk with at least one other person.
- Children must cross with the crossing guards stationed at the intersections immediately around the school. Do not permit children to cross the street anywhere except at these corners. The crossing guards for Chatsworth are stationed at
  - Larchmont Avenue/Boston Post Road and Chatsworth Avenue/Boston Post Road
  - Larchmont Avenue/Addison Street and Chatsworth Avenue/Addison Street
  - Larchmont Avenue/Forest Park Avenue and Chatsworth Avenue//Forest Park Ave.

If you drive, try to establish a carpool to ease congestion, and observe the following guidelines

- Children should be instructed to enter and leave the car from the side nearest the sidewalk. **Only pick up or drop off curbside.**
- Do not double park when picking up children. It is a moving violation to do so and the police will ticket.
- There is no parking allowed on the school side of Forest Park Avenue, Addison Street or Chatsworth Avenue. Parents and caregivers may stop their vehicles here for drop-off and pick-up, but must remain in their car. No parking allowed on the side of Wendt Avenue that is opposite the Larchmont Avenue Church.
- Do not park in fire or school bus zones.
- Do not park in crosswalks.
- Do not pass a stopped school bus when its lights are flashing.
- **The Larchmont Police will ticket unattended cars; cars parked in crosswalks or not parking zones; and cars parked or stopped in fire zones or school bus zones.**

Safety is also a concern on the playground. The following playground guidelines have been established:

- Dogs are **not allowed** on the playground at any time. Dogs **should not** be tied to the fence surrounding the playground at drop-off or pick-up.
- The school has established policies around the use of bicycles, scooters and skateboards on school grounds. These guidelines have been laid out in an earlier section of the handbook (bicycles, skateboards and scooters).

## **SCHOOL CLOTHING**

The School Clothing Committee of the Chatsworth PTA sells sweatshirts, sweatpants, shorts and t-shirts with the school logo during the school year. Look for details in the weekly bulletin.

### **SEPTA (Special Education PTA)**

SEPTA is a district-wide PTA focusing on special needs in education. Special Education services are varied and range from speech/physical therapy to resource room to self-contained classes and out-of-district placements. Anyone who has or knows a child with special education needs is encouraged to become a member. Annual dues and proceeds from the “mini” calendar sales support a variety of educational programs on topics such as the CSE process, social skills as well as Family Fun Night. Program dates, SEPTA officers and individual school representatives are listed on the district calendar. Topics for meetings are announced in the school newsletter. Please feel free to call with questions or for more information.

### **SNACKS**

Most teachers allow a snack break each morning. Teachers will communicate with parents the class policy for snacks. Children are encouraged to bring nutritious snacks. Please do not send drinks in glass bottles.

### **SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SCREENING**

General speech and language screening is done by the Speech Specialist in kindergarten, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and with students entering the New York State public school system for the first time. Screening is done in the following areas: articulation, voice, fluency and receptive or expressive language. The Speech Specialist will provide support for identified children based on the results of these evaluations.

### **STUDENT RECORDS**

Student records are confidential but are accessible to parents and legal guardians. Please call the principal’s office for an appointment. Copies of student records should be requested in writing.

Under the policies of the Board of Education and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), parent(s) and students 18 or older have the following rights to:

1. Inspect and review the student’s education records;
2. Request that the records be amended to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights;
3. Consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent; and
4. File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education alleging failure of the district to comply with FERPA and its regulations.

It is the district’s policy to disclose personally identifiable information from the student’s records without consent under the following circumstances

1. to other school officials within the district as permitted under FERPA;
2. upon request to school officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Children in grades 1-5 have access to the Chatsworth Computer Lab in various configurations throughout the year. Instruction focuses on computer literacy activities at the lower grades. As they progress, children learn basic keyboarding and word processing skills, use presentation tools do research on the Internet and use appropriate curriculum-related software. All classrooms are equipped with at least one computer that has Internet and e-mail access. Computers are also located at the library to help children with research projects. Parents receive a copy of the district's policy and regulations regarding the use of computers. Students are expected to conform to the district's regulations and both students and parents are asked to sign an appropriate use agreement. Students who do not return their signed policy are not allowed to use district technology.

## **TELEPHONE USAGE**

Children may use the office telephones for emergencies only.

## **TESTING**

Chatsworth teachers conduct a regularly scheduled academic testing and evaluation program. Assessments completed by the teacher are used to guide instruction and to monitor progress. Teachers will share assessment information with parents during parent/teacher conferences. Students in grades 3, 4 and 5 also participate in the New York State assessment in Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Assessments are scheduled in the spring. Please check the district calendar for dates.

## **VISION AND HEARING SCREENING**

The school nurse conducts vision and hearing screenings for all children on an annual basis. Parents are notified of any problem that should be reviewed by a child's pediatrician.

## **VISITING DAY**

Visiting Day is held in November on the morning of Election Day. Many classroom teachers inform parents of the ideal time to visit. It is recommended that parents check with the teacher ahead of time for that morning's schedule so you don't arrange a visit when the class is out of the classroom at art, gym, music, etc.

## **VOTING AND REGISTRATION**

In May of each year, registered voters are asked to cast their vote on the school budget. It is vital to our children's education that every family member over 18 vote in this annual school election. You are eligible to vote if you are a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years of age by Election Day, a resident of the district for one month prior to the election and are registered. For a registration form or absentee ballot, call the district clerk's office at 220-3007. Absentee ballots can be obtained several weeks in advance of the vote.

## **YEARBOOK/CLASS PHOTOS**

In the early fall, the Chatsworth PTA schedules school photos. Individual and class photos are made available for purchase by parents. The district calendar lists the specific dates for school photos. Each year, a school yearbook is available for a nominal fee to all students. All classes and many school activities are included in the yearbook. Many children bring their yearbook on the last date of school for classmates to sign.

