

# **The Country School Handbook**

## **2016-2017**



341 Opening Hill Road  
Madison, CT 06443  
203.421.3113  
[www.thecountryschool.org](http://www.thecountryschool.org)

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

THE COUNTRY SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT	5
STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY	5
THE COUNTRY SCHOOL – AN OVERVIEW	5, 6
THE CAMPUS	6
GOVERNANCE	6, 7
Board of Trustees	6
Administrative and Educational Leadership Teams	6, 7
THE COUNTRY SCHOOL ETHOS	7
RULES, POLICIES, AND GUIDELINES	8-20
Academic Honesty and Personal Integrity	8
Absences, Late Arrivals, Early Dismissals	8, 9
Asbestos Management Annual Notification	9
Backpack Policy	9
Behavior Expectations and Discipline Policy	9-12
Birthdays and Celebrations	12
Class Placement and Advisor Group Placement	13
Communications Guidelines	13, 14
Computer Use/Internet Acceptable Use Policy	14, 15
Dress Code	15
Electronic Devices	15
Gifts to Faculty, Administration, and Staff	16
Harassment Policy	15, 16
Health Policies and Information	16-17
Homework Policy	18
Parking and Transportation	18
Playground Rules	18, 19
Religious Practices	19
Use of Campus After Hours	19, 20
Visitors to Campus	20
THE SCHOOL DAY	20-22
Attendance, School Hours, Drop Off, Dismissal	20
After-Hours Use of Campus	21
Owl’s Nest and Homework Haven	21
School Closings, Delays, and Early Dismissals	21
Absences - Procedures	22
Faculty Available by Appointment	22
Student Extra Help	22
THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM	22-27
Homework Policy	23, 24
Progress Reports	24

Grades	24, 25
Academic Honors and Effort List	25
Academic Detention	26
Advisor System	25, 26
Class Placement	26
Homework Haven	27
Secondary School Placement Process	27
<b>PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, FACILITIES</b>	<b>27-30</b>
The Arts	27, 28
Physical Education	28
Interscholastic Athletics	28
Intramural Athletics	28
Outdoor Education	29
Service Learning	29
Field Trips	29
Community Meetings	29, 30
Reading Buddies	30
Student Leadership	30
Lockers	30
Elmore Library	30
<b>VOLUNTEERING</b>	<b>30-32</b>
Room Parents	30
Parent Teacher Association	31
Board of Trustees	31
Institutional Advancement	31, 32
Alumni Board	32
<b>COMMUNICATIONS - Mechanisms</b>	<b>32, 33</b>
Parent-Teacher Conferences	32
Publications	32
Email	33
Voice Mail	33
Instant Alert	33
School Website	33
Telephone and Cell Phones	33
<b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b>	<b>33, 34</b>
Lost and Found	33
School Lunch Program	33, 34
Standardized Testing	34
Visitors to School	34
<b>TRADITIONAL SCHOOL EVENTS</b>	<b>34-37</b>
Fall	34, 35
Winter	35
Spring	35-36
Ongoing Events and Traditions	36, 37
<b>STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING</b>	<b>38</b>



### **MISSION STATEMENT**

At The Country School, we are committed to creating an environment which is both academically challenging and responsive to the social and common emotional needs of growing children. Encouraging close relationships among students and teachers and cooperation between home and school, we foster a feeling of family. The school community strives to nurture each child, valuing his or her unique gifts in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

The traditional disciplines of reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign language form the core of our academic program. Because we seek to educate the whole child, the school is also committed to a vital arts program, strong offerings in physical education, and challenging opportunities for individual growth. Our teaching is spirited and promotes active learning. We provide experiences which are sensitive to different learning styles and stages of development. We guide students to discover their own strengths and develop confidence in their abilities to learn. Our program is rich and flexible, offering many pathways to success.

We recognize our responsibility to prepare students to meet not just academic challenges, but personal and ethical ones as well. Our faculty provides leadership for character development, guiding students toward self-reliance. We encourage our students to look beyond themselves, to work cooperatively with others, and to serve their communities and the larger world. We expect much of our students, because we believe they have much to give.

As we honor the creativity, sense of wonder, and exuberance in childhood, we hope to stir in our students enthusiasm for learning as an exciting, lifelong activity. We work to equip each student with a solid mastery of essential skills, healthy self-esteem, and a clear sense of values. At The Country School, we strive to empower young people to reach their highest, not only in school, but also in life.

### **STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY**

A diverse student enrollment and a curriculum that stirs appreciation for various cultures, including one's own, are increasingly important for the fulfillment of The Country School's mission. It is our intention to foster in our students both respect for individual and cultural differences and understanding of our common humanity, and so to prepare them to assume their responsibility as Americans and citizens of the world.

The Country School admits students without regard to gender, race, color, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation and other classifications that may be protected by law, to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to the student body.

### **THE COUNTRY SCHOOL - AN OVERVIEW**

The Country School was founded in 1955 to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of children. The school's founders strove to create a school "which would create an open atmosphere for learning in which parents and teachers working together can help children realize their full potential under the guidance of those dedicated to the natural curiosity of young minds and the necessary disciplines."

Today, students in PreSchool-Grade 8 undertake a curriculum designed to develop character, promote self-reliance and individual growth, and prepare them for further education and the responsibilities of citizenship. Spirited teaching, hands-on learning, and a balanced program of academic, artistic, and athletic challenges are hallmarks of The Country School experience.

Guided by a Board of Trustees, the school is approved by the State of Connecticut Department of Education. It holds membership in the National Association of Independent Schools and the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools, among other professional affiliations. Parent and alumni/ae groups are organized to support the school's mission, assist in fundraising, and planning and implementing

special events.

## **THE CAMPUS**

The Country School is set on a rural campus in an area of winding roads, open spaces, woods, and residential homes. Students spend much time outdoors, walking between buildings – or houses – to their classes and playing outside during recess, which is a part of every child’s school day. The campus has its own ropes course and climbing wall as well as a Garden Classroom where students engage in hands-on learning. The 23-acre campus includes two soccer and lacrosse fields, four tennis courts, one basketball court, a softball and baseball field, and expanded playground, and our signature ropes course. The campus is flanked by the Blue Trail, a state hiking trail through the woods.

Classrooms are located in separate houses across campus, with most arranged according to the ages and grades of students, starting with our youngest children in Clark House and moving across campus to Jones House, where most Middle School classes are based. Other houses include MacLane House, Robinson House, and the Farmhouse.

The Blatchford Learning Center houses Elmore Library, a history classroom, two science labs, and a lab dedicated to STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math). A second STEAM lab is located in Clark House, with a third in Robinson. The DeFrancis Gymnasium provides space for athletic activities and serves as our stage and performance space. The art studio and music room are adjacent to the gym.

Other facilities include the dining room, a playground for younger students (including a smaller, fenced-off area for our PreSchoolers), another for older students and after-school programs, and playing fields for a variety of sports and recess activities.

The Farmhouse, the school’s original building, houses offices for the Head of School and Development and Communications, along with a multi-purpose conference room. In addition to classroom space, Robinson also houses the Business Office, Office of Admission, and The Roost, our school store. The Health Office is located in lower Jones and the Academic Registrar’s office is upstairs in Jones House.

## **GOVERNANCE**

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Country School is governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board is charged with the strategic, long-term protection and strengthening of the financial, physical, and programmatic assets of the school. The Board’s mission is to take viability-related action to ensure programmatic excellence for the next generation of students.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS**

Led by our Head of School, members of our Administrative and Educational Leadership Teams work to implement the school’s Mission. As educational and administrative leader, the Head of School is responsible for all aspects of the daily operation and future life of the school. Members of the Administrative and Educational Leadership Teams oversee finance and operations, development, admission, student services, curriculum development, and technology.

## **THE COUNTRY SCHOOL ETHOS**

A Community Expectations Committee was formed in 2005 in response to the desire of The Country School school community to make explicit a common ethos that allows for healthy relationships between and among all constituencies resulting in a positive, academic learning environment for our children. As is customary at The Country School, the Mission Statement provided the committee with the philosophical framework for discussion and the resultant statement of school purpose.

### **Statement of Purpose**

At the most elementary level, the purpose of The Country School community is to establish an environment in which the primary relationship on campus can flourish – that between students and teachers. Thus, we believe strongly that the worth of all The Country School initiatives must be measured by how well they support and benefit student-teacher interactions.

### **In Support of the Purpose**

In order to support the student-teacher relationship, it is essential for home and school to work collaboratively to forge a common understanding rooted in a set of values.

The notion of responsibility is central to the understanding of the school’s core values. Specifically, we are all responsible to support the school’s primary purpose of establishing an environment conducive to teaching and learning by the two most important groups on campus – teachers and students. Thus, responsibility becomes the umbrella under which the school places the values of honesty, respect, and trust.

The key elements in a harmonious relationship between home and the school are honesty, respect, and trust. At the core, it is honesty that engenders respect and establishes trust. This is done through effective communication that allows all to work in support of the school’s aims of educating the whole child. The practice of honesty, respect, and trust fosters civility, encourages humility, and maintains the dignity of all members of the community.

### **Practical Applications**

Parents, faculty, and administration work most effectively in support of the teacher-student relationship when each respects the other’s contributions to the learning process. Parents offer unique insights into their children. They also support the school by contributing varied professional services and experiences through the commitment of time in volunteer efforts and by means of financial support. The faculty and administration provide professional expertise and are responsible for carrying out academic and extracurricular programs in keeping with the mission of the school.

The relationships among the parents and teachers and administrators are formally governed by the school’s written enrollment contract and this Handbook. When parents choose to enroll their child at The Country School, they agree to subscribe to its Mission, follow The Country School rules, and abide by its decisions. The Head of School is the final arbiter of disputes for the school. If there exists an impasse so severe that a parent cannot remain a constructive member of the community, both the parent and the school should consider whether another school would be a better match for the family.

## **RULES, GUIDELINES, AND POLICIES**

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PERSONAL INTEGRITY**

Consistent with our Mission Statement, The Country School places the highest priority on academic honesty and personal integrity. If education is to be meaningful, students need to be honest with themselves and others about their work. Plagiarism—using another’s words, ideas, or organization of thoughts and facts without indicating the source from which the information was taken—is a form of cheating; giving or receiving unacknowledged help of any kind is a violation of the standards of academic honesty. The following statement, prepared by Middle School students, is The Country School’s expression of academic honesty:

Academic honesty is essential to a healthy atmosphere for learning. It encourages trust and teaches us to seek the true understanding of the presented material. Academic dishonesty disrupts learning. Each student must rely on his or her own ideas and abilities. There is nothing to be gained from presenting words or ideas of others as if they are one’s own. The process of figuring out a complex challenge on one’s own not only increases knowledge, but also instills a sense of pride and accomplishment and promotes the level of independence needed to achieve personal goals.

## **ABSENCES, LATE ARRIVALS, EARLY DISMISSALS**

Prompt arrival for the start of school and regular daily attendance form the basis of a successful school life. If a child must miss a day of school or part of a day due to illness or unavoidable circumstances, parents must call the Main Office at 203-421-3113, ext. 110 as soon as they can. Absences, late arrivals, and early departures are tracked and noted on transcripts.

A student who comes to school after 8:10 a.m. is considered tardy and must report directly, with his/her parent/guardian, to the Farmhouse. The student must be signed in by a parent or parent's designee, and the student will receive a late pass. If a Middle School student (Grades 6-8) arrives at school before 8:10 a.m. but does not show up to first period class by 8:10 a.m., he or she will be considered tardy and will need to sign in at the Farmhouse and obtain a late pass.

Middle School students (Grades 6-8) are subject to corrective action for continued patterns of late arrivals. The following are per year:

- 4 tardies – student will receive a written warning (with a copy sent to parents)
- 6 tardies – student will receive a one-hour after school detention and parents will be required to meet with School administration
- 8 tardies – student will receive a two-hour Saturday detention and parents will be required to meet with School administration
- 10 or more tardies - school vacation school work assigned and parents will be required to meet with School administration

Parents should only request early dismissal for a child in pressing circumstances. For early dismissal parents should contact the Main Office (ext. 110) and students should notify teachers whose classes will be affected. Students are expected to make up any missed schoolwork and should work with their teachers to make arrangements.

Parents must report to the Main Office in the Farmhouse in person to sign out at the early dismissal time. Early dismissal before a school vacation or long weekend will not be granted except in extraordinary circumstances. Catching a flight or getting a jump start on a vacation is not considered an extraordinary circumstance.

Absences for students in all grades are a serious concern, even when they are excused due to illness or other unavoidable circumstances. When a student reaches eight (8) absences in a school year, a summer program may be required to ensure skills are in place for the next grade level. Students who accumulate more than twenty (20) absences in a school year may not be eligible for promotion to the next grade or to continue at The Country School.

Securing assignments or other work in advance and catching up upon return is the responsibility of the student. The school reserves the right to request additional tutoring, at the parents' expense, as a consequence of learning missed due to these absences.

## **ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT NOTIFICATION**

In accordance with Sections 19a-333-1 through -13 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, Asbestos-Containing Materials in Schools, we note the availability of our Asbestos Management Plan (AMP) for review. The AMP is available to parents and guardians, school personnel and their representatives, EPA and State representatives and the public.

The AMP includes reports of 3-year and 6-month inspections, reports of asbestos removals and other response actions, training, operation and maintenance procedures and other information of our Asbestos Management Program. This a.m.P is maintained in the Business Office and is available for review

during normal business hours. We remind you that this notification is required by law and should not be construed to indicate the existence of any hazardous conditions in our school building.

### **BACKPACK POLICY**

For a variety of reasons, including student health, safety, and reinforcement of organizational skills, we encourage students not to carry backpacks or large book bags during the school day. Instead, those students unpack backpacks and store them in lockers at the start of the school day.

### **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND DISCIPLINE POLICY**

#### **A Positive School Culture**

School culture and community are important components of independent schools. In order to maintain a positive school culture and build community, students and teachers need to know what to expect from one another when on campus or at Country School events. Being part of The Country School community means you are contributing to something bigger than yourself; thinking of others is a trait we strive to foster in all of our students.

As they grow and learn at The Country School, students are expected to internalize our school's core values of Cooperation, Assertion, Respect/Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Awareness, thus their behavior should reflect respect for oneself, fellow students, teachers, and the school community at large. There are three simple rules at The Country School that we know children will be able to memorize and easily recite.

1. Be kind to others.
2. Respect everyone's right to learn.
3. Take responsibility for yourself and your school.

As elementary and middle school educators we understand that students may make mistakes that require redirection and consequence. We also understand that there will be disagreement at times over discipline and consequences, and we call upon students, teachers, and parents to work together respectfully and cooperatively to maintain a trusting and healthy environment for learning. The approach to discipline will be consistent in each grade level and should be a learning opportunity for the student so he or she will make choices in the future that reflect behavioral growth. We counsel parents that it is easy to agree to support an atmosphere of trust until your own child inevitably violates a minor or major rule. That is when your trust gets most sorely tested and we ask you to understand that the consequence assigned is consistent with past practices and is tailored to maximize your child's growth and support the wider school community.

#### **Behavior**

To create a predictable and safe learning environment for all at The Country School and to guide children in the development of self-discipline, we have a process in place that includes communication, reflection, and logical consequences. Behaviors (or "misbehaviors") look very different at various age levels.

In the Early Childhood and Primary years we are at the beginning stages of teaching and guiding children to demonstrate appropriate behavior in the classroom and with peers. These three procedures are employed with students exhibiting inappropriate behaviors:

1. oral redirection
2. logical consequences
3. parent communication

These procedures happen concurrently, with an emphasis not only on communication, but on education. We see this as a teachable moment; we guide children through this more egocentric phase of their lives to a time when they become increasingly aware of others' different ideas, desires, and feelings. We can

help parents to understand this process and define what is developmentally appropriate. Within these three procedures, there must also be a focus or reinforcement of the classroom community, everybody working together to provide the best environment for learning. In cases where a child's behavior continuously disrupts other children's learning and these positive behavioral strategies have been employed over time or there is an act of physical aggression, the next layer of intervention will occur; the Dean of Student Life or Head of School will get involved, and greater consequences will be applied which can include meetings with parents during the school day and removal from the classroom.

In the Intermediate and Middle School Divisions the three basic procedures of oral redirection, consequences and communication continue, and teachers document misbehaviors in our discipline log. This ensures that advisors are informed and patterns of behavior are tracked so repetitive occurrences are recognized and the student can address them and get assistance in breaking the pattern. Teachers use the Student Support Team to gather strategies, but when behavior continuously disrupts others' learning even after behavior strategies have been employed, greater intervention is needed at the administrative level. There is a commitment to each child's long term growth and development.

Below is how behaviors will be managed:

### **General Behavior Management in the Classroom**

1. Teacher warning issued
2. Teacher strategies implemented (Take a break in the hallway or move seating in room)
3. Discipline log recorded and reflection snapshot written by the student; shared with advisor
4. Call home to inform the parents

### **Disrespectful Behavior In Class or Single Oral Altercation Between Students**

1. Discipline log and reflection snapshot - teacher has student write about what happened and how things could have been handled differently
2. Teacher calls home
3. Possible detention - either lunch or after school
4. Repetitive Behaviors - meet with parents and Dean of Student Life and/or Head of School, suspension or removal from school if repeated behaviors escalate.

### **Language and Tone**

It is our intention to elevate the discourse and maintain a community of learners that feels safe to all who choose to be here. Certain colloquialisms or slang that may have become mainstream in pop culture will not be considered appropriate to be heard at The Country School. Nor will swear words or phrases that are degrading or derogatory. In addition, use of sarcasm is not allowed as, regardless of how sarcasm is intended, it can be hurtful. A good rule is "never hurt anyone on the inside or the outside." We will follow the motto: If you think that this will make someone wince when you say it, don't say it. This goes for the people around you who hear it, not only the person at whom it is directed. Sometimes sarcasm hurts victims you do not even know. If a student uses an inappropriate word or phrase or uses sarcasm in a hurtful way toward a peer:

1. Discipline log and reflection snapshot - teacher has student write about what happened and how things could have been handled differently
2. Teacher calls home
3. Automatic after-school detention for swearing
4. Repetitive Behaviors - meet with parents and Dean of Student Life and/or Head of School, Saturday morning detention, suspension, or removal from school if repeated behaviors escalate.

### **Intentional Physical Contact or Oral or Written Harassment, Plagiarism, or other Academic Dishonesty**

At The Country School, any behavior that threatens the physical, emotional, or intellectual safety of any member of the community is deemed mean-spirited, unacceptable, and therefore prohibited and

will require administrative involvement. Examples of unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Acts by a student or group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate, threaten, intimidate, or bully
- Inappropriate use of the Internet and other forms of technology to denigrate or demean another student(s)
- Physical violence and attacks on another student or groups of students
- Spoken or written taunts, name-calling, and put-downs, including attacks on another student or group of students and racially, ethnically or gender-based spoken or written abuse or put-downs
- Damage of possessions, extortion, or stealing money or possessions
- Momentary or longer-term exclusion from peer groups within the school
- Copying the work of others by cheating or plagiarism

This applies to student behavior while on school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity, or on a school bus. In addition, unacceptable behavior that occurs outside of the school setting may be addressed by school officials if deemed appropriate because its impact is felt on school grounds or during the school day or creates an emotional situation for one or more students that could interfere with their learning. Each event is evaluated on its own and past behaviors are examined, then, depending on its seriousness, Dean of Student Life will meet with the child and determine consequences that could include the following:

- Being sent home (in cases of physical aggression students will be sent home immediately and where there are mutual acts of aggression, both students will likely be sent home)
- Detention after school
- Saturday detention
- In-school or out-of-school suspension
- Multiple day suspension
- Removal from school community permanently

We encourage any student, parent, or other witness to report conduct that violates this policy as soon as possible to the Head of School or Dean of Student Life. Prompt and reasonable investigations of alleged acts of unacceptable behavior will be performed confidentially.

A student may be permanently dismissed from school when his or her presence at the school is deemed a negative influence on or could impact the learning or safety of other students or the reputation of the school. Further, the school believes that a positive and constructive relationship between and among the school and a student's parent(s) or guardian(s) is essential to the fulfillment of the school's mission. Accordingly, the school reserves the right to dismiss or not to reenroll a student if the Head of School concludes in his/her sole judgment that the actions of a student's parent(s) or guardian(s) undermine school policies or procedures, make such a positive and constructive relationship impossible, disrupt the school community, or otherwise interfere with the school's accomplishment of its educational purpose.

### **BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS**

Our students like to bring refreshments to school to share on their birthdays; this does not include candy. We also ask that parents please be sensitive to food allergies. Teachers are happy to discuss plans with parents before the big day.

For out-of-school parties during the school year, please remember that invitations should be mailed or emailed, not delivered in school. Please send invitations to both parents when listed separately in The Country School Directory. We ask that at all times, special gatherings be arranged with sensitivity to the feelings of all children in the class. If you have a question, it is always wise to check with the classroom teacher or advisor.

## **CLASS PLACEMENT/ADVISOR GROUP PLACEMENT**

For our younger students who remain in self-contained classrooms the Educational Leadership Team and faculty work hard to match students to teachers, taking into account classroom dynamics, gender balance, new student inclusion, learning styles, and other considerations. Parents are strongly discouraged from requesting certain teachers.

For our older students, the recommended course of study dictates the teachers a student will have. In the Middle School, students are assigned advisors by the Educational Leadership Team working with both teachers and advisors. Individual student needs, group dynamics, and gender balance are taken into account as these groupings are made. Again, parents are discouraged from requesting certain advisors.

If there is something parents feel the team should know about their child that would contribute to this process, please put that into writing, with a rationale, and submit to the Dean of Student Life no later than June 1 for the upcoming school year.

## **COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES**

Effective communication between home and school is essential as we try to foster an environment in which our children can grow and learn. As such, we have developed the following Guidelines for Effective Communication:

- Remember that we are all here for the same purpose – to foster an environment in which our children can grow and learn.
- Bring concerns, questions, and ideas to the right place. Too often, we approach the person with whom we are most comfortable. This may not always be the most direct path to communicate your thoughts. Consider carefully who is in the position closest to the situation you would like to discuss. If needed, ask an administrator for help in determining this.
- Make sure to ask the right questions to ascertain all the facts before coming to conclusions.
- Know when to ask for help to gain perspective on a situation. Parents should rely on the experience of educators to provide information on how a student is doing. Teachers should rely on parents to offer specific insights into their children.
- Always assume that everyone is trying to do his or her best.
- Be mindful of the pronouns used. This has distinct ramifications for ownership of a situation, especially when all the adults need to work together in an effort to help a child. We all are responsible to and for supporting the school's primary purpose of establishing an environment conducive to teaching and learning by the two most important constituencies on campus – students and teachers.
- Always allow people to maintain their dignity. We all need to feel the discussion was fruitful and productive. While parents may not agree with every decision made by the school, in most cases the parent and school in support of the child will find enough common ground to continue a mutually respectful relationship.
- Avoid the pyrrhic victory, making your point at all costs, but at the risk of destroying a working relationship.
- Respect the need for confidentiality in certain situations.
- Communicate concerns openly and constructively with the appropriate school personnel.
- Understand that efforts by parents to lobby other parents will be viewed as counterproductive.

Questions and concerns naturally arise during the school year. This is the protocol for addressing them: For students in PreSchool-Grade 5, the classroom teacher is the initial person to contact when a parent has a question or concern about his or her child. Teachers may be reached at school through notes or voice mail messages. E-mail is appropriate for conveying information that is not of a sensitive or private nature. Except for brief exchanges of information, arrival and dismissal times should not be used for spontaneous conferences with teachers. If the question has not been resolved after speaking with the

classroom teacher, parents should contact the Head of School.

For students in Grades 6-8, questions about academic subjects should be addressed directly to the teacher concerned. Parents may also speak to the student's advisor. Teachers and/or advisors may be reached at school through notes, voice mail, or e-mail messages. Arrival and dismissal times should not be used for spontaneous conferences with teachers. If a concern has not been resolved after speaking with the teacher and/or advisor, a parent should address concerns to the Head of School. Questions about broader matters of policy or procedure should be addressed directly to the Head of School.

### **COMPUTER AND INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE**

As part of a community that shares a computer network, students at The Country School are expected to use the school's computers and Internet connection in the following responsible fashion:

- When beginning a computer session, students with permission from a teacher will log on using their own username. At the end of the session they will log off. Students must never log on with a username other than their own.
- A student will never do anything to intentionally disrupt the smooth operation of the school's computers or computer network. This means students will not rearrange the desktop, install programs, delete programs or system files, alter settings or shortcuts, or do anything else that would interfere with the normal operation of a Country School computer.
- Students will not give out any personal information about themselves or anyone else while using the Internet.
- Students will use their time on the computer to explore the material assigned by the
- instructing teacher. They will not engage in other activities such as chatting, using e-mail, instant messaging, unapproved browsing, or playing non-curricular games.

Not abiding by these guidelines will be grounds for disciplinary action.

The Country School makes available access to Internet resources to provide a diverse and academically challenging environment for our students and faculty. The Internet facilitates resource sharing, innovation, and communication. With this access comes the availability of material that may not be considered of educational value.

Accessing such material is expressly prohibited. It is the responsibility of the individual student, faculty, staff, and/or administrator to access only materials consistent with the educational goals of The Country School and its mission.

Use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges or other disciplinary responses. The School reserves the right to review and read data exchanged through the school network and there is no expectation of privacy. Students are not permitted to use cell or smart phones in the classroom. Copies of the full Internet Use Policy are available in the Main Office.

### **DRESS CODE**

The Country School expects a standard of dress during the school day that respects the atmosphere of learning and sets a proper tone for the work of the day. All clothing should be neat, clean, and in good taste. The simple rule of thumb is "dress up, not down!"

Students are expected to respect the judgment of the faculty member pointing out the dress code violation. Students in violation of dress code will need to change, which may require parents to deliver another outfit to school.

### **DRESS CODE - GIRLS**

- Dress, skirt, dress pants, khakis, corduroys or shorts (see length guidelines below)
- Dressy top with either sleeve or collar (if the top is not tucked in, there must be sufficient overlap between top and bottom so that fully raised arms expose no midriff)
- Shoes, sneakers

#### DRESS CODE - BOYS

- Collared shirt with collar visible
- Dress pants, khakis, corduroys, shorts
- Shoes, sneakers

#### NOT ACCEPTABLE

- Athletic wear, including sweatpants, sweatshirts, warm-ups, and athletic pants. The Country School
- sweatshirts are allowed.
- Leggings, yoga pants, workout pants (leggings with a skirt or dress over leggings are allowed if skirts or dresses are longer than or equal to length of arms with finger tips extending down)
- Short miniskirts or shorts (length must be longer than or equal to length of arms with finger tips extending down)
- T-shirts - even school t-shirts during the week (these are fine on spirit days or dress down days)
- Exposed midriffs, low-cut necklines, or clothing which is otherwise inappropriately revealing
- Spaghetti straps
- Denim or camouflage clothing
- Hats and jackets indoors
- Any clothing that is patched, torn, or in disrepair
- Oversized clothing
- Open-toe shoes without a back or any shoes without a back
- Shoes with wheels or “heelies”
- Clothing with writing or large logos

During Spiritwear days, students must wear something that says The Country School or The Country School.

#### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

School is not an appropriate place for handheld personal electronic devices, including iPods, games, and other recreational devices. If for some reason a student must bring a cell phone to school, it must be turned off and stored in lockers or kept with a teacher during the academic day.

#### **GIFTS TO FACULTY, ADMINISTRATION, AND STAFF**

We believe a note, letter, or small gifts made by students effectively express thanks and appreciation. Giving expensive gifts to faculty, administrators, or staff members, or collecting money for those gifts, is discouraged at The Country School.

#### **HARASSMENT POLICY**

The school has, as required by law, a Harassment Policy that states, in part: Any appropriate behavior, either verbal or physical, that disregards the self-esteem and worth of others is unacceptable. The policy describes procedures that a student, teacher, or staff member of The Country School may follow if he or she has experienced harassment, including unwelcome physical advances, unwarranted verbal remarks, derogatory statements, or discriminatory comments. Copies of our Harassment Policy are available in the Business Office.

#### **HEALTH POLICIES**

##### **Immunization Requirements**

Connecticut State Law states that a child must be adequately immunized before being permitted to attend school unless a valid religious or medical exemption has been filed in writing. Your child will not be allowed to attend the first day of classes until compliant with the minimum Connecticut State Department of Health immunization requirements. Updated information can be found on the state of CT Department of Public Health website. For more, visit [www.thecountryschool.org/healthoffice](http://www.thecountryschool.org/healthoffice).

### **Physicals and Health Records**

State health regulations require us to have an up-to-date health form signed by a physician documenting a student's health record and the physical exam. All new students must submit a blue State Physical Form showing proof of a physical performed after June 1 of the current school year.

PreSchool and PreK students need the yellow Connecticut Early Childhood Health Assessment Record with a current physical. A physical done after June 1 of the current year on the blue State Physical Form is to be submitted before the first day of school for all students entering Kindergarten. Each year Grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 are required to have on file a current (exam performed within 12 months) blue State of Connecticut Health Assessment form. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to maintain a current record on file in order for the student to participate in PE, recess, field trips and after-school programs.

### **Screenings**

- Scoliosis screenings must be done on all students in Grades 5-8 as mandated by the state. The School Nurse will examine all children who have not submitted an exam report by their physician. Parents will be notified if there is a need for a follow-up.
- Vision and hearing screenings are performed per state requirement. Parents will be notified if there is a need for a follow-up. Students will be assessed for evidence of head lice as circumstances dictate.

### **Illnesses and Injuries**

Children who are sick or may be coming down with something should not be sent to school, nor should those who have not fully recovered from an illness. In the case of a fever at or above 100° F, the temperature should remain normal for 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or Motrin prior to returning. Any child who has vomited or had diarrhea in the 12 hours preceding the start of the school day should be kept at home. The health of an entire class can be affected if these guidelines are not followed.

Students whose physical activity must be modified because of recent injury or illness must have written instructions from the child's doctor or parent. Please note that this will apply to PE, recess, and after-school activities. Any student with a new physical limitation (i.e., crutches, wheelchair, limited ability to stay the entire school day, etc.) should report to the Health Office prior to returning to classes. Any and all changes in the baseline status should be reported to the Health Office prior to returning to school.

### **First Aid Procedures**

Routine procedures for common complaints will include (but are not limited to):

- Orasol gel topically for toothache or mouth pain
- Cough drops or throat lozenges, one every three hours as needed
- Caladryl lotion, cream or gel topically for itching and insect bites
- Sting relief liquid or pads or meat tenderizer for insect stings
- Campho-Phenique liquid topically for cold sores
- Bacitracin or triple antibiotic cream topically to open wounds
- Salt-water gargle for sore throats
- Saline eye irrigation as needed
- Tecnu skin cleanser topically for actual or suspected poison oak or ivy exposure
- Burn spray with Lidocaine or Liquid Bandage applied topically to injured site

- Speed clot topical spray with Lidocaine for actively bleeding abrasion as needed
- Sunscreen or insect spray topically as needed

If there is any reason you do not want the above protocols followed for your child, the School Nurse should be informed in writing.

### **Medication**

No medication will be given without a specific doctor's order. If possible, please try to avoid having your child take medication during school hours. If a drug is ordered three times a day, it can usually be given before school, after school (3 p.m.), and at bedtime. If it is necessary for your child to take medication during school hours, these steps must be followed to meet very specific Connecticut regulations:

- The prescribing physician or dentist, licensed to practice in this or any other state, an advance practice registered nurse (APRN), or a physician assistant (PA) must submit a written order for each medication. Forms for these orders are available from The Country School Health Office or on our website.
- The parent or guardian must also sign the above written authorization for medication.
- The parent or guardian must deliver the medication directly to the School Nurse or Head of School along with the required documentation.
- Medications must be brought into school in an original over-the-counter container or an original pharmacy container labeled with name of student, name of prescribing physician, date of original prescription, name and strength of medication, and directions for administering.
- Students are not allowed to self-medicate. Self-administration of inhalers or medications for anaphylaxis is allowed with approval of the School Nurse, MD/licensed prescribing provider, parent, and/or Head of School.

Prescription medications are kept under lock and key and are accessible by the school nurse, who may administer medication at the request of parents and/or physician only. Requests must be accompanied by a doctor's orders. This applies to both prescription and over-the-counter medicines. Please note that health-related information and forms are located on the website at [www.thecountryschool.org/healthoffice](http://www.thecountryschool.org/healthoffice).

### **Concussion Policy**

We ask all parents/guardians to review the policy and procedure for concussion management located on our school website in the Health Office section (see above).

### **HOMEWORK**

For homework guidelines, please see the ACADEMICS section of this Handbook (page 22).

### **PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION**

Traffic and safety considerations during drop-off and pick-up times require everyone to follow some simple rules. When driving on campus, please:

- Drive slowly, patiently, and courteously
- Strictly adhere to entrance/exit designations
- Follow directional arrows
- Park only in designated spots
- Pull up as far and as close as possible to allow traffic to pass on the left
- Remember, drivers must remain with their vehicle; parking is not permitted
- Park in a designated spot in visitor parking, even if you intend to be on campus for just a few minutes

Note that it is a violation of federal law to pass a stopped school bus that is indicating it is discharging/loading passengers. As always, when it comes to the example we set for our children in any situation, common sense and quiet consideration should be the guiding principles to which we all adhere.

By law, the Town of Madison provides bus transportation for Madison residents at no charge. State statutes do not allow non-Madison residents to ride on Madison buses. Madison routes are published in the Shore Line Times in late August. In addition to the Madison bus, transportation is also available for students living east of Madison (a.m. and p.m.) and for those north and west of Madison (a.m. only). Contact the Business Office to register.

Any change in regular transportation arrangements, however temporary, must be made in writing and sent to your child's homeroom teacher or advisor in the morning. School rules apply to students when they are being transported to and from The Country School on a bus or van, or on a school field trip. The driver is in charge of the bus or van at all times. He or she is directed to insure that students are following school rules: respecting the driver's authority, staying seated with seat belts fastened, and not engaging in loud, rude, or disruptive behavior. The safety of our children and the laws of the road are our primary consideration.

### **PLAYGROUND RULES**

Children must not be left unattended in the playground areas. The school offers playground safety guidelines that are explained to our students by the classroom teachers and reinforced with reminders during the school day. After hours, parents/caregivers supervising children are expected to enforce the basic rules of safety, which include the following:

- Be safe!
- Jumping off the slide, rock wall, or swing set is not safe.
- Only two children should be on the rock wall at a time.
- Standing on top of the monkey bars is not safe.
- Please do not run with sticks or play with rocks or mulch.
- Respect our wonderful playground!
- Please do not stand on the swings or climb up the slide.

### **RELIGIOUS PRACTICES**

The Country School recognizes and respects the diverse religious backgrounds of its students and employees and appreciates how these diverse backgrounds enrich the educational process. The school addresses religion from an objective, curriculum-based perspective, encouraging students and employees to be aware of religious diversity and respectful of others' religious and nonreligious beliefs and practices.

Historically, The Country School has been closed on some religious holidays because a large number of students and staff members observe such holidays and are absent from classes, thereby compromising the educational process by removing students and teachers from the classroom. On other religious holidays, the school will make accommodations to its students who observe religious holidays while school is in session, provided the parent(s) provide written notice to the Head of School one week in advance of the holiday. Accommodations include the following:

- Not introducing new material that is unique in nature and cannot be made up by absent students (such as science labs) on the day of the holiday
- Not scheduling tests or quizzes on the day of, and the day after, the holiday
- Avoiding scheduling special extracurricular activities, such as field trips, auditions, fine or performing arts programs, school assemblies, tryouts, etc., on the day and nights of the holiday.

- Permitting a student to be absent to observe a religious holiday, and considering it to be an excused absence, provided the student’s family advises the Head of School of all expected absences, in writing; the student requests information ahead of time from teachers concerning material to be missed; the student requests homework assignments and test and quiz dates from teachers before the absence; and missed assignments are handed in and tests and quizzes taken within two days of the student’s return to school or by agreement with the teacher.

**Holiday Celebrations**

The celebration of holidays is an opportunity for teachers to expand learning opportunities about the diversity and variety of religious traditions. Decorations may be used as a part of the celebration but a teacher should be sensitive to all students’ diverse beliefs. Holiday programs, such as concerts, enrichment programs, and Parents Association activities, should focus on the seasonal nature of the holiday rather than the religious. Holiday performances may include a diversity of religious music selections.

Students will not be required to participate in any holiday celebration if it conflicts with the students’ religious beliefs. A parent may request that his/her child be excused from participating in any holiday celebration by sending a written request.

**USE OF CAMPUS AFTER HOURS**

For reasons of safety, students are not allowed to stay unattended after school hours. Students who are enrolled in Owl’s Nest or are participating in a supervised school activity, such as an athletic event, musical instruction, or Homework Haven are the direct responsibility of supervising teachers and may not leave the grounds unless a parent or other designee picks them up. Students remaining on campus who are not involved in a supervised after-school activity must be supervised by their parent or other designee.

**VISITORS TO CAMPUS**

All visitors to campus during the school day, including parents and guardians of enrolled students, must sign in in the Farmhouse and receive a visitor’s badge.

**THE SCHOOL DAY**

**ATTENDANCE AND SCHOOL HOURS**

**Drop Off**

All students must arrive between 8 a.m. and 8:10 a.m. and they report directly to their classrooms or first period classes. Attendance will be taken and the school day begins at 8:10 a.m. Students arriving late must check in at the Farmhouse. See Rules, Policies, and Guidelines for the policy regarding tardiness. The school does not provide supervision in classrooms before 8 a.m. Before-school care is available through Owl’s Nest.

When students are dropped off at school in the morning, they will be met at the entrance to their specific building by a member of the Educational Leadership Team and/or faculty. During the course of the day, all visitors to campus must sign in at the Farmhouse and receive a visitor’s badge.

**Dismissal**

Dismissal times vary:

- PreSchool flexible dismissal between 12:30 p.m. and 3 p.m.
- PreK flexible dismissal between 12:30 p.m. and 3 p.m.
- Kindergarten – Grade 5 3:05 p.m.
- Grades 6-8 3:20 p.m.

Parents picking up students are asked to be at school in a timely manner for dismissal. If you know that you will be detained, please call the Main Office at 203.421.3113. Parents picking up PreSchool or PreK students in Clark House should come into the building where teachers can see them. A Clark House faculty member will escort those students from Clark House who are riding a bus or staying in Owl's Nest to the appropriate area.

When students in Grades K-5 are dismissed, bus students will go to assigned bus areas in the Courtyard. A teacher on duty checks each student onto the appropriate bus. Carpool students in Grades K-5 will wait for their rides in designated carpool rooms flanking the Courtyard. Parents are asked to check out their children with the person on carpool duty. Students in Grades 6-8 who are riding the bus are asked to go to the bus sign-in area in front of Robinson House. Students in Grades 6-8 who are being picked up by car should meet their rides in the Courtyard.

Should it be necessary for your PreSchool-Grade 5 child to be dismissed early, a note must be written to the homeroom teacher, and students may be picked up from their classroom. In Grades 6-8, the note may be directed to the School Registrar and students should meet their parents or designee in front of Robinson House, where they must be signed out. Any child who becomes ill during the school day and is seeking early dismissal must report to the Health Office first.

If your plans regarding your child's transportation change for the day, please call the Receptionist (202.421.3113 x110) as soon as possible so we may assist in the efficient communication of these changes to your child.

#### **AFTER-HOURS USE OF CAMPUS**

For reasons of safety, students are not allowed to stay unattended after school hours. Students who are enrolled in Owl's Nest or are participating in a supervised school activity, such as an athletic event, musical instruction, or Homework Haven are the direct responsibility of supervising teachers and may not leave the grounds unless a parent or other designee picks them up. Students remaining on campus who are not involved in a supervised after-school activity must be supervised by their parent or other designee. See Rules, Guidelines, and Policies section for more about after-hours campus use and playground rules.

#### **OWL'S NEST AND HOMEWORK HAVEN**

Owl's Nest is our before-and after-school care program. It provides a safe, respectful and nurturing environment in which students have many opportunities to create, explore, have fun, and gain new knowledge. Owl's Nest teachers are actively involved in supervising and guiding students in their chosen activities. They strive to make Owl's Nest a fun place which children look forward to attending. Owl's Nest is available for all students, PreSchool – Grade 8, from 7:30 a.m. until school opens in the Farmhouse and from after school until 6 p.m. It is located in the Cafeteria.

Middle School students wishing a quiet after-school study area may elect to attend Homework Haven, which is located in the library. Parents will receive a registration form for Owl's Nest and Homework Haven in the summer. The forms, which explain fees for service, are located on the school website in the Parent section: [www.thecountryschool.org/currentparents](http://www.thecountryschool.org/currentparents).

#### **Contacting Owl's Nest**

During the regular school day (from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.), please call the Receptionist at 203.421.3113 x110. Just prior to 8 a.m. and after 4 p.m., please call x136. In the event of an emergency after 4 p.m., please page Owl's Nest at 860-876-4039.

#### **SCHOOL CLOSINGS, DELAYS, AND EARLY DISMISSALS**

The Country School utilizes an instant alert system which enables parents to receive important and time-sensitive information about school closings and other schedule changes via text message,

voicemail, and e-mail. Parents must register for this alert system prior to the start of school. Access the alert sign-up at [www.thecountryschool.org/currentparents](http://www.thecountryschool.org/currentparents).

Please also make certain that you have home, business, cell, friends', and/or neighbors' numbers on file with us, as well as carpool information and other emergency numbers. In the event of inclement weather, you may also call the school at 203.421.3113 for a recording with information about closings, delays, or early dismissals or see the homepage at [www.thecountryschool.org](http://www.thecountryschool.org).

Please note that when there is a 90-minute delay to the start time of school, Owl's Nest Before-Care will open at 9 a.m. In the event of school closure or early dismissal, Owl's Nest After-Care is also closed.

**ABSENCES – PROCEDURES** (See Rules, Policies, and Guidelines Section for Policies) If your child is ill and cannot attend school, please call the Main Office (203-421-3113, x110) by 8:45 a.m. A Lower School student's materials will be held by the classroom teachers. In Grades 5-8, if a student is too ill to attend school he or she may not be able to complete schoolwork. In this event, the school recommends that students who are ill concentrate on recovering as a first priority. If a student is able to work on assignments, course syllabi should be used as guides. Assignments may also be gathered by calling a classmate.

Students returning to school after an illness should check with teachers regarding any assignments they were unable to complete during their absence. The faculty will take into consideration the circumstances when it comes to determining the course of action.

Please note that it is age-appropriate to expect our older students to take more responsibility for homework collection as they move through the grades. It is an expectation, therefore, that Middle School students become a part of, if not the central figures in, the process of homework collection and management.

#### **FACULTY AVAILABLE BY APPOINTMENT**

From 3:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, every faculty member has planning time unless the faculty member is in a prior school commitment, e.g. coaching, committee meetings, bus duty, or has an extenuating circumstance. By appointment, faculty members are available during this time or another prearranged time for parent conferences and student extra-help.

#### **STUDENT EXTRA HELP**

At times, faculty and students may elect to meet during break, lunch period, or study halls for extra-help or planning sessions. In addition, faculty members are available by appointment Tuesday through Thursday after dismissal. While it should be the student's responsibility to seek extra help, if a student is struggling with a topic or skill it may be the instructor who seeks out the student and notifies the parent that extra help is available. However, extra help is not tutoring or re-teaching of a major portion of course material because of a long-term absence or a major learning difference.

#### **THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

At The Country School, the transition through the grades is gradual, both in terms of the academic experience and where students spend most of their time each day. Our Early Childhood program and Kindergarten, our first year of Primary, are housed in Clark House. Students in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Grades are based in MacLane House. Our Intermediate Program (4th and 5th Grades) are based on the first floor of Jones House. This provides a smooth transition for Middle School, which officially starts in 6th Grade and which is located primarily in Jones House.

The academic program follows a developmentally appropriate progression during the course of the years. Instruction is varied and allows for creative problem solving at all levels. Students move around the campus during the course of a day, attending classes with specialty teachers. Students in PreSchool and PreK experience global language (Spanish), PE, library, science, and music. In 1<sup>st</sup> Grade students begin to

make weekly visits to the art studio.

The academic program follows a developmentally appropriate progression during the course of the years. Instruction is varied and allows for creative problem solving at all levels. Students move around the campus during the course of a day, attending classes with specialty teachers.

Students in PreSchool and PreK experience global language (Spanish), PE, library, and science. Music class is added in Kindergarten, while in 1st Grade students begin to make weekly visits to the art studio. In 2nd Grade, computer lab class is added.

Students in the Middle School, Grades 6-8, are required to take a minimum of five academic classes, including courses in English, math, history, science, and a language. In Grade 6, students may opt to begin the study of French in lieu of Spanish, and in the 7th Grade, many students add Latin to their course of study. Students are also engaged in a variety of other subjects: art, computer, music, and physical education.

All teachers work to help guide and nurture students' emotional and social growth. Throughout the day children have many opportunities to socialize with one another. As a school which honors the creativity, sense of wonder, and exuberance of childhood, recess is a part of every child's day, whether in PreSchool or 8th Grade.

## **HOMEWORK**

At The Country School we strive to provide experiences that are sensitive to different learning styles and stages of development. We foster an environment where students discover their own strengths and develop confidence in their abilities to learn. Most importantly, we guide students toward self-reliance. It is through class instruction, assessment, and out-of-class assignments that we are able to monitor and foster these traits in our students.

Homework creates continuity between class meetings, provides practice in study and review, helps students develop independent learning skills, and aids them in managing their personal time effectively. We work to equip each student with a solid mastery of essential skills, and as a community we believe that homework is essential in bridging the gap between school and home in order to achieve this mastery. Children of all ages need an active reading life. This can mean being read to, listening to audiobooks, or reading independently. While our younger students will have occasional other tasks to complete at home, nightly homework begins in Grade 2. Homework will include practice of math facts, studying spelling rules, and reading. Beginning in Grade 3, the assignments will also include some long-term planning as students work on reports and projects.

As students get older, the amount of homework increases. Homework in Grades 6-8 is assigned daily and on weekends. While students do not necessarily work at the same pace, the following is a guideline for the *average* amount of homework each day. Some days teachers may not give an assignment and students should choose to read, study concepts or work on long-term projects. Study halls are built into the Middle School schedule and students are taught how to use this time effectively to help balance their assignments.

- Grade 4: 1 hour of sustained work
- Grade 5: 1.5 hour of sustained work
- Grade 6: 2 hours of sustained work;  
2.5 hours if taking honors math
- Grades 7 & 8: 2.5 hours of sustained work;  
3 hours if taking honors math and/or Latin

If class is missed due to an absence, it is the student's responsibility to obtain the assignments, gather the notes, and seek clarification or help as needed from the teacher. Students may also seek the help of the advisor for these purposes. Students are encouraged to talk to their teacher(s) if they encounter difficulty completing an assignment or need an extension. If a student appears to have either too much or too little homework on a regular basis or is struggling with assignments, parents should contact the teacher.

With the exception of summer reading or long-range projects, homework is not assigned over extended vacations. Research shows that maintenance of basic skills and working on deficit areas is important over the summer. We have a required reading list for each grade PreSchool - Grade 8. The Country School assigns summer reading and math for students entering Grade 4 and up along with reading and writing assignments to support those areas.

Parents are urged to provide an appropriate place for their child to study without interruptions. Teachers post their assignments on their websites, which feeds into a grade level homework calendar that can be found in our Google Calendars. However, time is made in class for students to write down assignments in their daily planner and students should use both to help them with short and long term planning.

### **PROGRESS REPORTS**

For our younger students (PreSchool through Grade 5), teachers report regularly on the progress of their students. Parents receive formal written reports at the end of each term. In addition, student growth and progress are discussed in parent conferences. No grades are given, although as part of the transition to Middle School, students in 5th Grade will receive effort ratings in the spring semester. Please note that while reports and conferences are the formal means of communication, dialogue regarding student progress occurs whenever it is needed.

Middle School students are assessed for progress in a variety of ways: through homework, class participation, quizzes, tests, and special projects. The Middle School year is divided into trimesters for all academic classes and specials. Full written reports on all academic subjects are reviewed with the students and sent home shortly after the close of each term. Students in Grades 6-8 receive letter grades and effort ratings in addition to written reports.

### **GRADES**

Midway through each trimester, interim grades are issued to students in 6th, 7th, and 8th Grades. It is important to note that these grades represent how a student is faring at that particular time. They serve as benchmarks and can serve as a basis for dialogue with the advisor. Students will also receive progress reports in each academic class four additional times during the year.

The letter grades used in the Middle School, introduced in the 6th Grade, are as follows:

- A:** Indicates work of excellent quality and a superior understanding of subject matter. Work is done promptly, accurately, and neatly. The student is organized, able to work independently, contributes significantly to the class, and applies insight and creativity to work.
- B:** Indicates work of a quality well above the minimum standards set by the instructor. The student shows comprehension and application of the subject matter; submits complete, accurate, and prompt assignments; works with a minimum of direction; and participates constructively in the class.
- C:** Indicates work that is satisfactory in comprehension and application but lacks consistency and contains errors. The student often needs direct supervision. Class participation may also be an issue for the student.
- D:** Indicates a poor understanding of subject matter that may be due to inattention in class, a lack of

organizational skills, or inconsistent home preparation. The student seldom participates in class and needs extra supervision and reinforcement from the teacher. A parent conference is required for any student receiving a D.

**F:** Indicates a combination of the problems stated above, coupled with little effort on the part of the student to resolve them. A parent conference is required for a student receiving an F.

**I:** Indicates work is incomplete. A letter grade will be given when work has been completed.

In addition to letter grades, effort evaluations are judgments of a student's willingness to do more than the minimum work in school and on homework, thoroughness and consistency of application of material and skills, attention and participation in class. The following numbers are used in evaluating effort:

**4:** The student regularly goes beyond what is expected or required.

**3:** The student regularly displays good effort in all or nearly all areas.

**2:** The student sometimes demonstrates satisfactory effort, but also shows minimal effort.

**1:** The student regularly demonstrates minimal or unsatisfactory effort.

### **ACADEMIC HONORS AND EFFORT LISTS**

Students in Grades 6-8 who have demonstrated particularly strong effort in all their courses receive special mention at the end of each term. The criteria for the effort list: A minimum of four effort grades of 4 or better, two of which must come from the traditional disciplines of English, math, history, science, and foreign language, with nothing below a 3 (i.e., a 3- does not qualify as a 3).

The criteria for the Academic Honors List: A minimum of four grades of A- or better with no grade below a B (i.e. a B- does not qualify as a B). Two of the four grades of A- or better must come from the traditional disciplines of English, math, history, science, and foreign language.

The Academic Honors and Effort lists are posted in Robinson House, Jones House, and Clark House, recorded on a student's transcript, and distributed to local newspapers. Certificates are presented to students after each semester.

### **ACADEMIC DETENTION**

A student in the Middle School who is unprepared for class may receive an academic detention during lunch as an opportunity to make up work. After-school detention of one hour may also be assigned. Detentions are scheduled on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 3:15-4:15 p.m.

### **ADVISOR SYSTEM**

The Advisor System has been an integral part of the Middle School experience for many years and is a cornerstone of the independent school educational experience. The Advisor System starts in 6th Grade, as advisors provide guidance to students on academic and affective education matters.

Advisors work in teams to support the whole grade level through team activities which include service learning, life skills curriculum, leadership opportunities, and the school ropes course. Each advisor monitors a small group of students and serves as the link between the home and the school. As such, they serve as conduits of information on student progress. If parents have a question about an academic subject, they should first address their concern to the teacher. Parents are also welcome to contact their child's advisor.

Advisors meet with students often throughout the week. They connect daily during snack break, at lunch, and at the end of the day during Advisor Seminar.

The basic goals of the Advisor System are outlined below:

**Goal 1:** Monitor the academic progress of students and develop timely and effective programs to address areas of need.

**Goal 2:** Monitor the social and emotional development of students and develop timely and effective programs to address areas of need.

**Goal 3:** Facilitate communication between home and school to clarify mission, program, policies, and student progress.

**Goal 4:** Teach organizational and study skills.

Advisors are anchored to a grade level to ensure that the curriculum for each grade level is delivered to all students each year. Throughout their time at The Country School, Middle School students develop strong relationships with adult advisors strengthened by shared common experiences on Outdoor Education trips and at advisor group meetings.

Students are assigned advisors by the Educational Leadership Team, working with both teachers and advisors. Individual student needs, group dynamics, and gender balance are taken into account as these groupings are made. Parents are discouraged from requesting certain advisors.

### **CLASS PLACEMENT AND ADVISOR GROUP PLACEMENT**

For our younger students, who remain in self-contained classrooms, the Educational Leadership Team and faculty work hard to match students to teachers, taking into account classroom dynamics, gender balance, new student inclusion, learning styles, and other considerations. Parents are strongly discouraged from requesting certain teachers.

For our older students, the recommended course of study dictates the teachers a student will have. In the Middle School, students are assigned advisors by the Educational Leadership Team working with both teachers and advisors. Individual student needs, group dynamics, and gender balance are taken into account as these groupings are made. Again, parents are discouraged from requesting certain advisors.

If there is something parents feel the team should know about their child that would contribute to this process, please put that into writing, with a rationale, and submit to the Dean of Students no later than June 6 for the upcoming school year.

### **HOMEWORK HAVEN**

Homework Haven is a quiet study hall for Middle School students that takes place after school in the library takes on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons from 3:15-5 p.m. Students attending Homework Haven have access to library resources, including computers, and must quietly work on homework until picked up. Fees for this service are billable on a per-season basis, and forms may be downloaded from the school website.

### **SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACEMENT PROCESS**

Many 8th Graders choose to apply to independent and/or parochial secondary schools. Others choose to attend their local public school. The Secondary School Counselor oversees that process, working with students, faculty, and parents to help ensure that the school a student attends after graduation is a good fit.

Beginning in the spring of the 7th Grade year, students and parents will meet with the Secondary School Counselor to learn about the process. During the 8th Grade year, the Counselor meets with students and parents to discuss the schools to which a student will be applying. Most schools require teacher recommendations, and the Secondary School Counselor helps oversee that process and also writes a student profile. After a student is informed of admissions decisions, the Counselor works with the student and his or her family to choose the right school.

Admission testing for independent and parochial schools is required, and the Secondary School Counselor will help families navigate the requirements of individual secondary schools.

## **PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, FACILITIES**

### **THE ARTS**

As a school that values the development of the whole child, The Country School is committed to a vibrant arts program, offering multiple performing and visual arts opportunities to students.

#### **Theater**

On the performing arts side, parents and students enjoy watching talents emerge on stage. Plays or musicals are performed by most grades throughout the year. Highlights are the annual Middle School musical theater production and the all-school Holiday Concert. The Middle School musical, open by audition, is faculty directed and student run. Backstage, lighting, and sound production is student-run during the performances. Students may also choose to work on set design.

#### **Chorus and Band**

All students are engaged in music and choral instruction and performance from the earliest years. Older students are involved in at least one performing group. Beginning in the 5th Grade, students have the option of playing a band instrument as well singing in the chorus; these students meet for group lessons and as a full band. For those who are able and willing to perform more difficult choral music, there is a chamber chorus. The chamber chorus is open by audition to students in Grades 6-8. Both the instrumental and choral programs have several performance opportunities throughout the year.

#### **Young Musicians Program**

Younger students have the opportunity to participate in instrumental music and voice lessons through the after-school Young Musicians Program. Information about this program, including registration and fees, is available on the school website or by contacting Dan Cross or Vicki Wepler.

#### **Visual Arts**

The visual arts program begins in the earliest years, with our youngest students enjoying hands-on art activities in the classroom. They also regularly visit the Clark House's STEAM room, where they engage in creative science, technology, engineering, art, and math activities. As our students get older, they begin visiting the art studio, which is equipped with a kiln and woodworking materials. Student artwork is displayed throughout the campus, and an art show is held in the spring.

#### **Cultural Arts**

The Parent Association supports programs of cultural arts enrichment for students in all grades. Performers, speakers, and workshops representing many creative disciplines are scheduled throughout the year, and all are open to parents and friends of the school. Consult the Little Hoot and The Country School website for dates of performances.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The Country School is committed to strong offerings in physical education, and each student participates in regular PE classes. The PE program stresses sportsmanship, physical fitness, and skill building. Its focus is on participation and cooperation, though it also recognizes and supports the benefits to be gained through competition.

Students must wear sneakers for PE class. Students in Grades 5-8 must change into shorts, shirts, sweats, socks, and sneakers for PE class. Skateboard shoes are prohibited. All PE clothing must be marked with the student's name printed clearly. Parents may purchase The Country School attire for PE from Lands' End (see current parent portion of the website for instructions: [www.thecountryschool.org/currentparents](http://www.thecountryschool.org/currentparents)) and/or The Roost, the school store.

## **INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS**

The The Country School interscholastic athletic program is open to students in Grades 5-8. Our Varsity and Junior Varsity teams compete in the Connecticut Independent School Athletic League (CISAL). Almost all of our students participate in at least one season of interscholastic sports; many are involved in multiple seasons.

Interscholastic sports uniforms are on loan to players and should be returned clean at the end of the season. A fee will be charged for uniforms which are lost, torn, or not returned. Schedules for games and practices, as well as directions to away games may be found on the website, [www.thecountryschool.org](http://www.thecountryschool.org) (go to Athletics Calendar on News and Calendar page). In case of inclement weather, parents are asked to check the website calendar. Please note that you may also subscribe to alerts which will notify you of changes. Access the alert sign up from the Athletics Calendar.

## **INTRAMURAL ATHLETICS**

The PE Department offers periodic opportunities for students to participate in intramural athletics and/or instructional clinics. These provide opportunities for younger students to learn the rules and skills of a given sport before competing at the interscholastic level. Fees for intramurals are payable on a per season basis. When available, forms may be downloaded from the school website. Intramural opportunities will be announced in the Little Hoot.

## **OUTDOOR EDUCATION**

As part of The Country School's commitment to experiential education, each year students routinely participate in Outdoor Education experiences, some of which may span several days for older students. Second to none in the region, this hands-on program allows students to define and strengthen for themselves qualities of character and citizenship, ideals of practical and philosophical leadership, notions of responsible stewardship of the environment, and sound decision-making skills.

The Outdoor Education Program is an integral part of The Country School academic curriculum, and all students participate. Starting in their earliest years, The Country School students engage in outdoor activities, whether it is a nature walk on the Blue Trail for PreSchoolers or a visit to a nearby tidal pool for Kindergartners. In Grades 5-8, students embark on a series of overnight outdoor adventures.

Much thought is given to ensure that students engage in outdoor experiences that are sequential in terms of physical challenges presented and skills learned. The program culminates just before graduation, as 8th Graders embark on an extended adventure in the Southwest, where they enjoy hiking, camping in tents, rock climbing, canyoneering, and river rafting.

The The Country School campus is specifically designed to teach lessons about the natural world. All students participate in hands-on activities in the Garden Classroom, where they learn about sustainability and ecology as well as collaboration and responsibility. Students also engage in adventures on the school's ropes course and climbing wall. Each day, time is set aside for outdoor play for all students, whether age 3 or 14.

## **SERVICE LEARNING**

All students at The Country School are encouraged to look beyond themselves, to work cooperatively with others, and to serve their communities and the larger world. As such, students of all ages will have many opportunities throughout the year to serve others. In recent years, service activities have included:

- Working once a month at a local soup kitchen
- Raising funds to build a well in Uganda
- Collecting cans of food and other non-perishables for those in need

- Raising funds for disaster relief
- Raising funds for animal welfare
- Organizing a bike ride to raise funds for cancer research
- Participating in global environmental sustainability efforts.

Watch the Little Hoot for further information about Service activities or see the Service section of the website.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

As part of the school's commitment to experiential education, field trips are commonly scheduled during the year. Parents are often invited to chaperone. Before each trip, permission slips are sent home with students. These slips must be signed and returned to the school in advance of each trip. Students without signed permission slips remain at school.

### **COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

The entire school gathers every other Friday at 8:30 a.m. for an All School Meeting. Announcements are made and songs are sung. This is an opportunity for everyone in the school to come together as a community.

### **READING BUDDIES**

On the Fridays when there is no All School Meeting, students in Grades PreK-8 participate in the Reading Buddies program. This program is a central component of The Country School experience, enabling older and younger students to form lasting friendships as they share books and activities linked to our Affective Education Curriculum. PreK students are paired with a 4th Grade Reading Buddy, and the relationship continues until the 4th Grader graduates from the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. At that point, the younger Reading Buddy becomes an older and is paired with a PreK student.

### **STUDENT LEADERSHIP**

The development of formal leadership skills is a goal of the Middle School program. Eighth Graders may serve as a member of the Student Leadership Team. A member of this team is elected chairperson and runs team meetings. All Middle School Students have the opportunity to serve on school-wide committee chaired by a member of the Student Leadership Team. Each committee follows the tenets of Appreciative Inquiry and Empathetic Listening. Leadership skills for each committee are defined and fostered in the group. Students will learn about the various committees in the fall and will complete an application stating why they would like to serve. Committee membership is designed to be well rounded so each committee has a mix of Grade Levels.

### **LOCKERS**

Students in Grades 4-8 are assigned a locker. Lockers are not locked; we trust each other and respect each other's space. Backpacks are not carried around school – everything must be stored in the locker or on available shelves. Unless a student is directed to bring an electronic device to class, it should remain turned off and in the locker.

### **ELMORE LIBRARY**

The school library is open during school hours for The Country School students and parents. Suggestions for acquisitions are welcome. Gifts to the library are also appreciated, especially to commemorate a child's birthday. If you would like suggestions for a Birthday Book, please contact our librarian. The child honored by the donation of a Birthday Book is allowed to borrow it first.

### **VOLUNTEERING**

Since its founding, The Country School has relied on volunteers to help carry out the work of the school. The support of volunteers is needed and welcomed, and every volunteer's commitment, large or small, is important. From Parent Association activities to fund-raising efforts, from the Board of

Trustees to Room Parents, volunteers are critical to the school's ability to fulfill its mission.

Volunteers help teachers with classroom activities and visit classrooms to share professional and personal expertise; they help with beautification of our grounds and serve on various committees; they lead tours during Admissions Open Houses, and help out at Grandparents and Special Friends Day.

### **ROOM PARENTS**

Room parents serve as a critical link between the classroom and families. They often assist the teachers with class activities and are essential in welcoming new parents to the school community.

### **PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION**

The Parent Teacher Association fosters and facilitates a spirit of community among - all school constituencies, including students, parents, faculty, administration, and staff. The Parent Teacher Association, made up of current The Country School parents, is led by a group of volunteers with responsibility for overseeing initiatives related to communications, hospitality, volunteer coordination, fundraising, quality assurance, and services to the communities. Membership in the Parent Teacher Association is automatic upon enrollment of a child in the school.

Through effective communication, Mission-supporting activities, and regular meetings, the Parent Teacher Association helps all members of the school community feel connected to one another. The Parent Teacher Association serves as a communications link between current parents and the administration. It also facilitates communications between The Country School and the broader community and helps raise awareness about The Country School among external constituencies. A list of current Parent Teacher Association leadership is included in the Directory and on the website.

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Members of the Board of Trustees are elected at the Annual Meeting of the Corporation, held each year in June. Trustees and other designated volunteers serve on a variety of Board committees and subcommittees.

Volunteers are appointed to serve on committees for the duration of one year. Board committees and ad hoc committees include: the Alumni Board, Buildings and Grounds, Institutional Advancement, Finance, Investment, Long Range Planning, the Committee on Trustees, and the Program Committee. For additional information about the role of the Board of Trustees, please see the GOVERNANCE section of this Handbook or the website: [www.thecountryschool.org/boardoftrustees](http://www.thecountryschool.org/boardoftrustees).

### **INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT**

Like other independent schools, The Country School relies on its entire community – parents, faculty, administration, and staff, alumni, parents of alumni, grandparents, friends, trustees, and former trustees – to advance the school's Mission. Guided by the school's Assistant Head of School for Development and External Relations, volunteers engage in activities that take the form of fundraising as well as friend raising. Both are essential as we work to advance The Country School.

As at all independent schools, fundraising provides revenue that gives The Country School a critical edge in providing an exemplary education to its students. Annual Giving Campaigns provide the school's largest source of non-tuition revenues, bridging the gap between tuition and the actual cost of educating each student. Annual Giving consists of several funds, including the Annual Fund (supporting operating costs), the Endowment Fund (legacy gifts to the school's endowment, supporting its long-term financial health), the Founders' Promise Fund and David and Marcia MacLane Endowment (for scholarship), the Outdoor Education Fund, and the Heritage Society (planned giving). Gifts to these funds are tax-deductible.

From time to time, the Annual Giving Campaign may take on a special fund development project such as a capital campaign. Proceeds from special events may be designated for a special project or earmarked for other needs of the school.

In collaboration with the Development Office, the Parent Association conducts fundraising activities such as book fairs. Additionally, students and parents often raise funds for specific community service projects. All fund-raising activities are overseen by the Development Office and must be approved in advance.

### **ALUMNI BOARD**

The Country School has an active Alumni Board which oversees reunion planning, alumni communications, a class agent network, and other activities involving former students, parents, and faculty of the school. The Board also identifies and nominates the recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award, an honor given annually to a The Country School graduate who is working to serve the community and the larger world.

The Alumni Board's mission is to promote a continuing active relationship between the school, its alumni, and their families; maintain a spirit of fellowship among its members; and work as ambassadors to support the best interests of The Country School.

### **SCHOOL COMMUNICATION - Mechanisms**

In addition to the Communications Guidelines stated above in the Rules, Guidelines, and Policies section of this Handbook, The Country School has established a variety of mechanisms to facilitate communication between our core constituencies:

#### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Two conference days are set aside during the school year for parents to meet with teachers. In the fall and winter, PreSchool-Grade 5 teachers will schedule times with parents while teachers in Grades 6-8 will be available on conference day in the gym so that parents can visit with each teacher at designated times. Additional conferences may be requested by either parents or the school at any time.

#### **Publications**

The Country School distributes weekly as well as more periodic publications to keep the community informed about events on campus. The Country School publications include:

- The Little Hoot, a regularly scheduled online newsletter which gives a brief overview of upcoming activities and a synopsis about events that have taken place. Please notify [communications@thecountryschool.org](mailto:communications@thecountryschool.org) if you are having trouble receiving the Little Hoot or if you have information you would like to submit for inclusion. Copies of the Little Hoot are archived on The Country School website.
- Country Connections, a periodic magazine which reports school activities and alumni news.
- Announcements from the Head of School and/or other school administrators. These may take the form of e-news or printed documents.
- Individual classroom teachers also produce periodic publications, either electronically or in print. Most classroom information is also available on teacher pages on the school website.

Please note: In the interest of environmental sustainability and financial responsibility, the school endeavors to communicate without paper whenever possible.

#### **Email**

Faculty, administrators, and staff may be contacted by email. Email addresses are listed on the school website in the Faculty Directory (see Community tab). In general, the formula for Country School email addresses is: [firstname.lastname@thecountryschool.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@thecountryschool.org).

### **Voice Mail**

Faculty, administrators, and staff may also be contacted through the school voice mail system by calling the main number (203.421.3113) or the voice mail number (203.421.4830). Please refer to the published School Directory or on-line directory for a list of voice mail numbers. Please note that the Receptionist's schedule does not allow for delivering messages by hand except in the case of an emergency.

### **Instant Alert System**

In the event of inclement weather, early dismissals, schedule changes, and/or other unexpected events, The Country School has installed an instant alert system. The e2Campus emergency notification system allows the school to send messages to the entire community via text device, voicemail, or e-mail. Parents are asked to sign up for the instant alert system before the start of the school year. The signup form is made available in the summer mailing and also on the school website in the Parent/current school year section. Parents who signed up in previous years do not need to do so again unless their contact information has changed.

### **The Country School Website**

For general information about The Country School and for updated calendar listings, please visit [www.thecountryschool.org](http://www.thecountryschool.org). Please note that you may subscribe to calendar, news, and/or athletics alerts which will notify you when an event has changed or been added. Sign up for alerts in the news and/or calendar section of the website – look for the alerts symbol and follow directions.

Forms and other information for parents will be located in the Parent section of the website. Go to [www.thecountryschool.org/currentparents](http://www.thecountryschool.org/currentparents). Please note that you may go to teacher pages ([www.thecountryschool.org/teacherpages](http://www.thecountryschool.org/teacherpages)) for information relevant to a specific teacher or course.

### **Telephones and Cell Phones**

Please remind students that school phones are to be used only with permission from a faculty, administration, or staff member who will help students determine whether the use of the phone is appropriate. The Country School strongly discourages students from bringing cell phones to school, and they are not permitted in the classroom. If for some reason a parent deems it necessary for a student to bring a cell phone to school, it must be turned off and stored in locker or backpack during the academic day.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

#### **LOST AND FOUND**

We ask parents to label all articles of clothing, lunch boxes, backpacks, etc., with their child's name. If items are not labeled and remain unclaimed, they will be given to organizations such as the Shelter for Women and Children or the Community Closet in Branford. Donations are made in December and June. The Lost and Found is located in the basement of Robinson House.

#### **SCHOOL LUNCH**

The school lunch program offers a choice of a entrees and other items for students in Grades 1-8, faculty, administration, and staff. Emphasis is placed on healthy and locally grown produce. On Fridays the entrée is pizza. Students in PreSchool, PreK, and Kindergarten may also sign up for pizza. Lunches may be pre-ordered during sign-up periods. Some items are always available on a per diem basis (see hot lunch at [www.thecountryschool.org/currentparents](http://www.thecountryschool.org/currentparents)). No refunds will be made for absences, school closings, or class trips.

During morning snack times and lunch, the food service staff will offer a selection of nutritious snacks and drinks which may be purchased by students in Grades 3-8. Milk and orange juice are provided at no

cost for all students. Please note that lunches and snacks brought from home should not include candy or soda. Food may not be reheated in the kitchen microwave or stored in the kitchen refrigerator. Questions may be directed to the Business Office.

### **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

We administer the Educational Records Bureau's Comprehensive Testing Program IV (ERB) for Grades 4-8. Score reports are sent home in the fall. Parents interested in reviewing ERB testing are encouraged to contact the Director of Student Services. In addition, The Country School is a test site for the Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT). Students who are interested in applying to secondary school have the option to take the SSAT at The Country School in both the 7th and 8th Grade years.

### **VISITORS TO SCHOOL**

Students may bring visitors to school if permission has been granted by the student's advisor or teacher. If visitors are interested in applying for admission, please refer them to the Admission Office. All visitors must sign in and receiving a visitor's pass in the Farmhouse. See Rules, Policies, and Guidelines for more.

### **TRADITIONAL EVENTS**

#### **FALL**

#### **Community Welcome Day**

New families and returning families join faculty for a special back-to-school gathering.

#### **Back-to-School Night**

Parents come back to school to meet teachers and other parents and learn about curriculum.

#### **Family Picnic or Fall Festival**

Families get together on an afternoon to renew old friendships and welcome new families.

#### **Middle School Outdoor Education Trips**

Early in the fall, students in Grades 6-8 spend a few days with their classmates and grade-level advisors canoeing, backpacking, and/or hiking. Fifth Graders will participate in two day-long Outdoor Education experiences designed to prepare them for their first overnight trip in the spring.

#### **Halloween Parade**

Halloween is celebrated by students in PreSchool through Grade 4 with a costume parade viewed by parents, faculty, and Reading Buddies. Please try to maintain cultural sensitivity when selecting a costume and avoid excessively commercial or violent themes. With awareness of our school values and mission, plus a healthy dose of fun, we can help our children participate in one of the more delightful Lower School traditions.

#### **Alumni Day**

Graduates are invited to return to school for the annual fall Alumni Day. The day typically features a visit to campus as well as the traditional alumni-faculty soccer game. Other alumni events may also be planned during the course of the school year.

### **WINTER**

#### **Winter Concert**

Parents and friends attend an evening performance by Middle School band and chorus members.

#### **Holiday Program**

Parents and friends attend a The Country School musical program featuring students in all grade levels and recognizing holiday traditions throughout the world.

### **MacLane Poetry Recitation**

Our annual recitation for students, begun in 1956, is The Country School's oldest tradition. Every student in the school memorizes a poem and recites it in front of classmates, teachers, and parents. In Grades 5-8, the recitation is juried, and a panel of judges selects a winner from among the finalists from each grade. Even PreSchool and PreK students learn poems and recite them in small groups.

### **Celebration of 100 Days**

Members of the graduating class celebrate the last 100 days of school with their Reading Buddies.

### **Snowflake Ball**

The Snowflake Ball is a semi-formal dinner dance, planned by and for 7th and 8th Graders.

## **SPRING**

### **Grandparents and Special Friends Day**

Grandparents and Special Friends visit classrooms and watch an all-school program. This special tradition brings together many generations on campus. Many The Country School parents choose to participate as volunteers, but they are not guests on this day. It is the responsibility of parents to make sure the school knows who their child's grandparents are and who will be attending the event. The GPSF committee, working closely with administrators of the school, is responsible for design and implementation of one of the largest events on campus.

### **Celebration of the Arts**

Parents are invited to an evening showcasing student artwork and music.

### **Middle School Outdoor Education Trips**

Students in Grades 5-8 participate in overnight Outdoor Education trips with their advisors and classmates. For 5th Graders, this marks their first overnight Outdoor Education trip, while for 8th Graders a 10-day trip to the American Southwest is the culmination of the Outdoor Education program.

### **IDEA Day**

IDEA Day is a day set aside to explore themes related to diversity, inclusion, and empathy. IDEA stands for Interpreting Diversity Education through Action. Younger students participate in a variety of hands-on activities and workshops specifically focused on the designated theme while Middle School students participate in general discussions centering around these topic and engage in a series of workshops throughout the day. They may also discuss a book and/or have guest speakers.

### **Secondary School Fair**

Representatives from a variety of secondary schools come to campus to introduce students and their parents to their respective schools. Families of 7th Graders find this evening event, which is open to The Country School community as well as to the public, helpful as they begin to consider life after The Country School.

### **The Spring Event**

A special celebration for adults in the community, the Spring Event is traditionally held at an off-campus venue and raises funds for a special program at school. Recent events have benefited the STEAM program, Outdoor Education, and scholarship.

### **Countrystock**

An afternoon of music and fun on The Country School athletic field.

### **Annual Meeting of the Corporation**

The Board of Trustees reviews the year's events for members of the Corporation: parents, faculty, administration, and staff. New Board members are elected.

### **Athletic Awards Ceremony**

This ceremony celebrates the accomplishments of all students in Grades 5-8 who have participated in interscholastic athletics during the fall, winter, and spring sports seasons.

### **Field Day**

Students enjoy an array of fun athletic activities, with a special Reading Buddies lunch. Students wear blue or gold for the day, depending upon which team they are on.

### **Prize Day Ceremony**

Eighth Grade students are awarded the school's traditional prizes for excellence in various areas of the curriculum. Several other awards are made to students in other grades.

### **Graduation Family Picnic**

Eighth Grade families enjoy an informal lunch and entertainment after the Prize Day ceremony.

### **Graduation**

The school community, past and present, comes together as each graduate is given a very personal farewell from The Country School.

## **ONGOING EVENTS AND TRADITIONS**

### **Annual Musical**

A highlight of the performing arts program is the annual musical. Middle School students perform and assist with stage management, sound, and lighting. Recent shows have included "Beauty and the Beast," "Guys and Dolls," "Annie," "Oklahoma!" and "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown."

### **Cultural Arts Programs**

Parents are invited to watch as guest artists entertain and work with students during special enrichment programs throughout the year.

### **Eureka!**

A periodic literary journal featuring writing samples from students throughout the school. This is a project overseen by Middle School students.

### **Middle School Dances and Fun Nights**

Throughout the year, the Student Council and Campus Life Committee arrange dances and/or fun nights for Middle School students. The Snowflake Ball, a semi-formal dinner dance, is for 7th and 8th Graders.

### **Open Houses**

The Office of Admission holds periodic Admission Open Houses throughout the school year. Please refer interested friends to the Admission Office.

### **Reading Buddies**

Older and younger students form lasting friendships as they share books and activities every other Friday throughout the year.

### **School Plays and Musicals**

Parents and students enjoy watching talents emerge on stage. A highlight is the annual musical theater production.



**Statement of Understanding  
The Country School Handbook  
2016-2017**

Please sign and return this form by September 22, Back-to-School Night.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

This is to acknowledge that I have read The Country School Handbook 2016-2017. I understand that The Country School Handbook includes the school rules and expectations so we can make choices that support the community and honors our School's traditions and values.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*For families with multiple students in Grades 4-8, please have each child sign this document.*

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_