

LITTLE TOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Parent Handbook 2021-2022



56 Gregory Street
New City, NY 10956

(845) 624-3471

<http://www.ccsd.edu/LittleTor>



Success shines on everyone at Little Tor!

CLARKSTOWN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
62 Old Middletown Road
New City, New York 10956

2021-2022

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DISTRICT MISSION

CCSD, in partnership with the community, will meet the individual academic and social-emotional needs of all students within a safe environment while empowering them to reach their full potential in a complex society.

DISTRICT VISION

CCSD is where students become well-rounded critical thinkers able to communicate effectively and become responsible, ethical contributing members of a global society. As life-long learners, students will be able to use their respective talents and skills to collaborate, innovate and positively change their community and the world.

DISTRICT STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal 1: The district will ensure high standards by using a variety of research-based curriculum and instructional models and professional development to create opportunities for all students to become critical thinkers and life-long learners.

Goal 2: Utilizing technology effectively as a tool, students will communicate, construct learning, and demonstrate problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Goal 3: The district will allocate resources in alignment with learning goals to create facilities which enhance and maintain technologically advanced, efficient and safe environments that are conducive to learning.

Goal 4: Students will take ownership of their actions by demonstrating self-advocacy, initiative, responsibility and critical thinking skills.

LITTLE TOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Dr. Matthew Younghans: Principal
myounghans@ccsd.edu

Main Office (845) 624-3471 (press 3)
School Nurse: (845) 624-3471 (press 4)
Transportation: (845) 639-6380
Food Services: (845) 639-6526

SCHOOL HOURS

Student arrival8:20-8:30
Instructional Day.....8:30-3:00
Dismissal..... 3:05-3:20 (Buses then walkers)

PLEASE NOTE

School supervision begins at 8:20am, with student staging on the school bus until that time. Therefore, we ask that students do not arrive before 8:20 am.

Information is listed in alphabetical order by topic.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

There are various after school programs available for students through different organizations. The CLC (Community Learning Center), PTA and YMCA are such groups that offer programs ranging from homework help to enrichment programs. The YMCA contact number is (845) 727-1037. Other organizations will send out notices as various programs become available. After school programs may be cancelled when there is an early dismissal. You will be notified via the emergency calling system in such cases.

ANIMALS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS

This is the CCSD policy regarding animals in the schools: “No animals, domestic or otherwise, except for seeing-eye dogs, are permitted on school grounds. Permits requiring use with animals will not be approved. The exceptions to the preceding will be those animals that are classroom pets, which are used in science experiments, and/or which perform a security or safety function, and which are part of any cultural arts programs provided for the students. Animals used for this purpose must be under the control of an adult and must be handled in a way that does not endanger children. Notification of any “animal visits” must be sent home to parents in case of allergies.

ARRIVAL

The school building will open at 8:20am daily. Student arrival for school begins no earlier than 8:20am and students will report directly to their classrooms. Classrooms will open at 8:20am and the students will walk to their classroom areas from the school bus, parent drop off, or the Early Risers Program. Instruction will begin at 8:30 am following morning announcements and lunch count.

Please make every effort to have your child in school on time so that he or she can begin the day ready and prepared. New York State has also passed regulation on the tracking of student lateness and absenteeism which can be found [by clicking here](#).

- Students in the Early Risers Program will stage in the Cafeteria and will receive breakfast prior to 8:20am.
- Students arriving by District Transportation will stage on the school bus until 8:20am, and then will proceed directly to the classroom(s).
- Walkers/Car Riders are requested to arrive at school no earlier than 8:20am.

PARENTS DROPPING OFF CHILDREN BY CAR:

- PLEASE pull all the way up to the white and red fire lane sign near the cafeteria (if you are the first car). The following cars should also pull up as close as possible allowing others to pull into the driveway.
- PLEASE instruct your children to exit or enter cars on the passenger side of the vehicle only. Students must never walk into the driveway to enter or exit on the driver's side.
- PLEASE be courteous to fellow parents waiting behind you by leaving the driveway immediately upon dropping off your child.
- PLEASE remember that if you need to come into the school, you must park your car in the parking area. Please do not stop the flow of traffic by parking in front of the school.

ARRIVAL DURING SCHOOL DELAYS:

- In the event of a two-hour weather related delay, the school building will open at 10:20am. Student arrival for school begins no earlier than 10:20am on these days and students will report to their designated, supervised areas as normal. Classrooms will open at 10:20am and the students will walk as a group to their classroom areas. Instruction will begin at 10:30am following morning announcements and lunch count. **PLEASE do not drop students off before 10:20am on such days, as we have no means to supervise them.**

ATTENDANCE – Daily Attendance for Students

(Please refer to CCSD policy & regulation 5100). You may access this policy [by clicking here](#).

The Clarkstown Central School District in keeping with New York State Education Law, which requires that we inform parents of their right to be notified when their child is absent from attendance at school, has implemented the following procedure:

Student attendance should be taken each morning by 8:30 AM by the classroom teacher and entered into the student management system (eSchool Data). Lunch count slips and dismissal notes should be sent to the main office by 8:40 AM each day. It is the teachers' responsibility to maintain accurate attendance records for the school year. At the end of the school year, all late slips and excuse notes must be sent to the main office for record keeping.

Students arriving in school after 8:30 AM, must go to the greeter's desk to receive a late slip and be added to the attendance count and lunch. Please encourage students to arrive in school on time. If you should notice any patterns of tardiness or absence, please inform the student assistance counselor or the office.

Students who are absent must bring a written note signed by the parent or guardian when they return to class indicating the reason for absence from school. Family vacation absences will be recorded as unexcused absences in the student management system. The school recognizes the following reasons for student's absences from school as valid- illness, death in family, impassible roads, religious observance, etc... (see complete list in 5100).

ATTENDANCE – Parents and Sibling Attendance at School Functions

(SUBJECT TO CURRENT COVID GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES)**

Throughout the school year, our students perform at a variety of concerts and attend special assemblies. Parents, non-school aged siblings, and other adult family members are typically invited to attend these special events at the school. For some assemblies, siblings who are students at Little Tor will be invited to attend as well, as long as their parent(s) are in attendance. In this situation, a parent must notify the Main Office or Security/Greeter to grant permission for the student to leave the classroom. For all assemblies and concerts, the school will determine whether siblings will be permitted to attend. This decision will be based upon many factors, including space considerations, appropriateness and timing of the assembly (i.e. time away from learning or testing schedules), and available supervision. Please read the invitation flyer as this information will be clearly noted.

Parents and siblings may attend the following events/parties/programs (subject to change):

- **Assemblies:** Parents may attend by Principal/teacher invitation.**
- **Class parties:** Parents may attend by teacher invitation. Little Tor siblings may **not** attend.**
- **Concerts:** Parents may attend by Principal/teacher invitation. Little Tor siblings may attend.**
- **Graduations/Moving Up Ceremonies:** Parents may attend by Principal/teacher invitation. Little Tor siblings may attend. They may **not** stay for the subsequent celebration.**

BICYCLES

Students are greatly encouraged to ride their bicycles and scooters to school during appropriate weather months. Children riding bicycles home from school must have a parent permission note on file in the office to be dismissed this way. Students riding bicycles must wear a helmet. All bicycles must be placed in the provided racks nearest the school and locked on a daily basis. Parents and students should also have a backup plan in case of inclement weather. Students will not be permitted to ride their bike or scooter home in times of inclement weather.

BIRTHDAYS/CELEBRATIONS

Class parties (Birthdays and holiday celebrations) must adhere to the NYS and CCSD guidelines. "School celebrations during the school day shall be non-food celebrations. However, celebrations may include fruit or vegetable platters. Exceptions by the school principal will be made where an event or holiday is celebrated with a lunch (i.e. Thanksgiving). In such a case, the menu will be developed with healthy selections. In certain holidays where candy is typically exchanged (i.e. Valentine's Day), the candy must be taken home for consumption."

Individual student birthdays may be recognized and celebrated in the classroom in keeping with the NYS and CCSD guidelines. Such celebrations should be coordinated with the parent a few days in advance as to not interrupt the teacher's instructional plans.

Invitations for home parties are not to be distributed in school unless all students are invited. Allowing students to hand out invitations is at the discretion of the teacher. RSVPs must be made directly to parents and may not be communicated through school.

Due to health codes, all food that is distributed must be in original packaging, with ingredients clearly stated (this includes fruits & vegetables). No home baked goods can be distributed during the instructional day.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Those students who are eligible for bus transportation will receive a bus pass at the end of the summer. Parents with concerns or questions may call the CCSD transportation department at (845) 639-6380. Students who ride the bus will be put on their bus everyday unless we have a note from the parent stating otherwise. Students may not ride on any bus other than their own without special permission from the transportation department. Please supply the classroom teacher with a note regarding such accommodations for our records and for daily communication with the transportation department. We make every effort to ensure that children are safe and sent home the way in which they are intended to by their parent and/or guardian.

CELLULAR DEVICES

As per district policy, students may not use "a cell phone or beeper or have an activated cell phone or beeper during the regular school day." Any student in possession of a cell phone must keep it in turned off and in their backpack, and does so at their own risk.

For parents: When visiting the school, please set your cellular phones and beepers to vibrate or silent mode. Also, please exit the classroom or auditorium should you need to answer a phone call. This will help us minimize unwanted disruptions during instructional time.

CLASS PARENT/ PARTIES

(SUBJECT TO CURRENT COVID GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES)**

In September, a letter will be sent home with all parents regarding their interest in becoming a class parent. **Class parents will be designated by the classroom teacher** with the responsibility of organizing celebrations and assisting with supervision needs of the teacher. Class parties must adhere to the NYS and CCSD guidelines. The CCSD Nutrition & Wellness Policy states:

“School celebrations during the school day shall be non-food celebrations. However, celebrations may include fruit or vegetable platters. Exceptions by the school principal will be made where an event or holiday is celebrated with a lunch (i.e. Thanksgiving). In such a case, the menu will be developed with healthy selections. In certain holidays where candy is typically exchanged (valentine’s day), the candy must be taken home for consumption. Food will not be used as a reward or as a part of a curriculum lesson.”

Individual student birthdays may be recognized and celebrated in the classroom in keeping with the NYS and CCSD guidelines. (Please see the above section under “Birthdays.”)

Due to NYS health codes, all food that is distributed must be in original packaging, with ingredients clearly stated (this includes fruits & vegetables). No home baked goods can be distributed during the instructional day.

CHILD CUSTODY/VISITATION RIGHTS & INFORMATION

For the protection of our children, it is imperative that parents provide the Main Office with the most updated copies of any legal document specifying custodial parent/visitation rights. This is intended to prevent the release of a student to a parent who may no longer have the legal right to see a child or remove him/her from school, or have gained such rights. The office will share this confidential information with pertinent staff members, only. In the absence of any court order to the contrary, a non-custodial parent who makes the request is entitled to receive copies of the following documents:

- Report card
- Progress reports
- Information about parent-teacher conferences
- Notification of school events, i.e. student concerts, plays, field trips

CLOTHING

Be sure to label all of your children’s clothing and other belongings. Kindly contact the school when your child reports items missing. We will do our best to assist you and/or look through our Lost and Found bins.

Please ensure that your child's footwear is safe and appropriate, to avoid accidents and injury. Flip flops are not safe for the playground or gym. "Heelys," roller skates or skateboards are not permitted in school. During the winter months, we will have outdoor recess daily, weather permitting. Please make sure your child comes to school with appropriate cold weather clothing: a warm coat, hood or hat, and gloves or mittens. Our district protocol is to send students and staff out for recess whenever there is a "real feel" temperature of 32 degrees or greater.

Please refer to the CCSD Code of Conduct for information regarding the district dress code, should you have questions. The CCSD Code of Conduct can be accessed [by clicking here](#).

CLASS PLACEMENT

As per CCSD policy, class placement meetings will take place in May and June with members of the current and following grade level teachers, as well as Special Education Teachers, specialists, interventionists, etc. Class placement will be finalized in August and parents will be informed of their child's class placement during the last week of August.

District regulation states: "Prior to placement of students within their next year's class, the building principal will meet with appropriate staff members. Factors considered for placement include: academic aptitude, achievement levels, behavior, emotional needs, health, independence, interaction with peers and adults, leadership, learning styles, motivation, social needs, & special needs. Principals will communicate with parents, in a timely fashion, their right to provide information regarding placement. Parents who wish to provide information about their children concerning any of the above factors should forward that data, in writing, prior to May 1 to the building principal for consideration."

CODE OF CONDUCT

(Refer to CCSD policy & regulation 5300). You may access this policy [by clicking here](#).

Pursuant to the provisions of section eight hundred six of the General Municipal Law, CCSD recognizes that there are rules of ethical conduct for public officers and employees which must be observed if a high degree of moral conduct is to be obtained and if public confidence is to be maintained in our unit of school government. These standards of conduct can be found online at [CCSD Policy 5300 Code of Conduct](#).

At Little Tor Elementary School, we take pride in our positive behavior, respect and responsibility for self and others. Years ago, a **Code of Excellence** was developed and adopted, which supports a school environment where students can feel safe, comfortable and challenged to reach high academic standards. It is using these key principles that we have developed our school and class rules.

During the 2013-14 school year, a committee of teachers, teaching assistants and parents worked together to update the code of conduct following the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) framework. It has been implemented ever since, and continues to be useful and

pertinent. Students will be taught these school rules on a regular basis using the Expectations for Behavior matrix:

LITTLE TOR CODE OF EXCELLENCE

Little Tor Students Promise to be:

- **Respectful**
- **Responsible**
- **Safe**

In addition, the Little Tor Elementary School has implemented the RULER Approach, a social-emotional learning program for the past two years, and will be implementing this program to students this school year.

LITTLE TOR BULLYING PREVENTION RULES

- **We will not bully others.**
- **We will try to help others who are bullied.**
- **We will try to include students who are left out.**
- **If we know that somebody is being bullied, we tell an adult at school and an adult at home.**

CONFERENCES & COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF

The purpose of the Parent/Teacher communication is to establish and maintain a good working relationship between the home and the school. Parent-teacher conferences are always encouraged whenever questions or problems arise. If you would like to speak with the teacher, please send an email to the teacher's attention and the teacher will contact you at their earliest convenience within a reasonable time frame. Email is the preferred and acceptable method to contact teachers regarding your child or any other needs that may arise. The Main Office will not interrupt the class unless an emergency exists. In order to preserve instructional time, teachers will often get back to you at the end of the day or early in the morning. If you have a concern regarding a classroom practice or procedure, please contact the classroom teacher first. If you are in need of additional assistance, contact the school Principal, Dr. Younghans at myounghans@ccsd.edu.

District-wide parent teacher conferences have been scheduled throughout the year. New this year, we are attempting to provide more choice in the dates to accommodate work schedules for parents. We will hold two ½ day Conferences in the Fall (December) and two ½ day Conferences in the Spring (March). Parents are encouraged to work with the teacher to select one date and time in December and one in March. The dates of the parent teacher conferences for this school year are:

November 2, 2021 (8:30-2:15)

March 18, 2022 (8:30-2:15)

Nighttime Dates and Times TBD

In addition to the district scheduled conferences, parents and teachers can initiate additional conferences as needed. This must be scheduled in advance and should not interrupt the instructional day.

Please refrain from having discussions with teachers while they are supervising students (i.e. in classroom or hallway) or extend a morning conference beyond 8:15am since we are engaged in the supervision of students at these times. Additionally, school or PTA events are inappropriate times to discuss your child's progress. We ask that you please adhere to these requests.

CONTACTING YOUR CHILD DURING SCHOOL HOURS

If there is an urgent need to reach your child, or an emergency during school hours, please contact the Main Office, who will facilitate that contact. Your child will be called to the Main Office to speak with you. Please note that students are not permitted to use their cell phones during the school day and that cell phones should remain off and in the child's backpacks should they choose to bring them to the school building.

CROSSING GUARDS

A Crossing Guard is provided for the safety of the students at the entrance on Gregory Street between 8:00–8:30 a.m. and 3:00–3:20 p.m. The Clarkstown Police Department assigns the Crossing Guard.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We hold our responsibility of confidentiality very seriously and will observe our ethical and professional responsibility of confidentiality of student information. The CCSD policy states that staff members "shall not disclose confidential information acquired by him/her in the course of his/her official duties or use such information to further his/her personal interest."

We ask that parents exercise the same good judgment when sharing information about students seen during their course of their visit to school (stopping by the office, volunteering in a classroom, etc...).

DISCIPLINE

School discipline affords every student the guidance in making good decisions about his/her behavior and, as such, an opportunity to learn in a positive, nurturing classroom environment. Little Tor's Code of Conduct lays out expectations and consequences for student behavior in a progressive and child-friendly way. Teachers should discuss expectations, positive recognition, and consequences for appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

Consequences for infraction of rules are sometimes necessary. They do not necessarily need to be addressed in the order they appear within our discipline matrix. Consequences depend on the severity of the offense and the number of times the rule is broken. If any serious problem occurs, student will be sent immediately to the office.

DISMISSAL

We encourage all families to have their children dismissed at the regularly scheduled time whenever possible so that they can learn the routines of wrapping up the day and have adequate time to pack up their materials needed to take home.

If an occasion arises when you need to pick your child up sooner than the regular dismissal schedule, we will call down to the classroom before the ringing of our first bell (prior to 2:50). We will hold on ringing down to the classrooms from 2:50 until all the buses are called to avoid disruptions to the classroom during this important “packing up” time. We hope to minimize dismissal errors and give everyone a dedicated time to prepare for dismissal. It is our full commitment and intention to send every child home the way their parent/guardian intended every day, without error. Please note that it is very difficult to change dismissal plans at the end of the school day after dismissal has begun.

- Please notify the school on the first day of school how you want your child to be dismissed (bus, pick up “walker” or after school program). This form will be sent home with your beginning of school information packet.
- Students may not leave the classroom or the school grounds without permission. Students may be released to parents during the school day only by written request. All children must be signed out at the Greeter/Security desk. No child will be dismissed directly from the classroom.
- At dismissal time, all bus children will leave the classroom as their buses are called, prior to walkers at 3:00pm.
- From 2:50 to 3:15pm, the entrance to the school grounds on Gregory Street will be closed. Traffic will not be allowed into the school area during this crucial time, with the exception of school buses or school vans used for student transportation. Traffic will resume after the buses have left the school property. After all buses have left the school grounds, walkers will be dismissed at approximately 3:15pm.
- **PARENTS WISHING TO CHANGE DISMISSAL ROUTINE:** We are always most concerned with the safety of your children. This atmosphere of safety relies most importantly on communication between the home and school. For this reason, in the event you need to change your child’s dismissal procedure on any given day, you must put the requested change in writing with all the details. Email is completely acceptable. This information must be given to the teacher on the day before or on the morning of the request and is only good for the date(s) you specify on the note. If you place the letter in a sealed envelope, please mark the envelope “DISMISSAL” in case of teacher absence. A separate note for each sibling affected by the change should be given to that child’s teacher. This note must include a telephone number where you can be reached in the event there are questions or further confirmation is necessary.

Except in the event of an emergency, there will be **NO EXCEPTIONS** to this policy. If an emergency arises, please call the Main Office and we will work through it together.

PARENTS PICKING UP CHILDREN BY CAR:

- Please pick up your child after the buses leave the school grounds at approximately 3:15pm. Students waiting for parents will stand in front of the school.

- Please pull all the way up to the white and red fire lane sign near the cafeteria if you are the first car. The following cars should also pull up as close as possible allowing others to pull into the driveway.
- Please instruct your children to exit or enter cars on the passenger side of the vehicle only. Students must never walk into the driveway to enter or exit on the driver's side.
- Please be courteous to fellow parents waiting behind you by leaving the driveway as soon as possible upon picking up your child.
- Please remember that if you need to come into the school, you must park your car in the parking area. You must not stop the flow of traffic by parking in front of the school.

EARLY DISMISSALS FROM SCHOOL (UNANTICIPATED)

As the winter months approach, please remember to review weather-related early release procedures as a family. It would greatly assist the school's process if you can write in a dismissal note on days when we anticipate snow related early closures to indicate how your child should be dismissed should the school close early.

EMERGENCY CLOSING/DELAYED OPENING

When school is closed due to inclement weather or other emergencies, announcements are made via multiple mediums:

- NTI: The District Emergency Notification System will distribute the message via contact numbers you submitted on the emergency contact forms.
- CCSD Switchboard: (845) 639-6300 (Press 9 and then 4. This will take you to the weather information mailbox.)
- Radio: WRCR (1300), WLNA (1420), WHUD (100.7 FM), WFAS (1230 AM & 103.9 FM), WVOX (1460 AM), WVNJ (1160 AM), WCBS (880 AM) & County Radio (1640 AM).
- Television: NEWS 12 (Channel 12) WABC-TV (Channel 7) & Fox 5 (WNYW), WRNN-TV (Kingston), WNBC-TV (Channel 4)
- Internet: www.ccsd.edu, www.lohud.com, www.cancellations.com

The decision to close or delay openings is made by the Superintendent of Schools after consultation with local police, the highway department, various weather services, and the CCSD Transportation Department. Should the number of days of inclement weather closings exceed the number of days provided, the excess days will be made up at the discretion of district administration, and all CCSD families will be notified of these changes via the District Calendar.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In following with the district guidelines, Little Tor holds regular Building Level Emergency Response Team meetings where procedures are reviewed, documented, and shared out with staff.

Teachers review procedures with students to prepare them for emergencies and various drills are conducted during the course of the school year for emergency preparedness:

- District-wide Early Dismissal Drill (please refer to the district calendar)
- Emergency Drills determined by the school building and New York State regulations (i.e. lockdown, safety hold, off-site evacuation, high wind, etc...)
 - 12 Drills Annually - (Eight of the 12 required drills must be completed by December 31st)
 - **Four Lockdown drills: (One drill per quarter)**
 - Announced - (by November 12)
 - Unannounced - (by January 28)
 - Unannounced - (by April 29)
 - Unannounced - (by June 24)
 - **Eight Evacuation drills (formerly referred to as Fire Drills)**
 - (4) - Blocked or secondary exit drills
 - (3) - Primary exit drill
 - (1) - Off-site evacuation location drill (required in alternate years)

A minimum of one evacuation drill must take place during lunch or assembly unless instruction is provided on how to evacuate during lunch or assembly.

EXTRA HELP SCHEDULE

Each teacher will contractually schedule and hold two additional help periods per week either before or after the instructional day. Teachers will inform parents of the extra help schedule for the school year in the month of September. Extra help sessions may be general or specific, based on class and student needs.

HEALTH SERVICES

Students requiring medical attention will be referred to the school nurse. Accident reports will be filed for all accidents that require medical attention.

The school nurse will provide teachers with a “conditions list” of ALL students in the school who have specific medical alerts and needs. This list will be updated as needed throughout the school year.

- **Allergies:** Parents of students with food allergies are asked to release information about their children’s food allergies to the school and the school community via written communication. The school nurse will share this information with the entire staff. Students with severe food allergies will sit in a designated area with other students who purchase lunch. School

personnel completing lunch duty will supervise these students with extra care to avoid contact with any food or wrapper that may cause an allergic reaction or be harmful to their health.

- **Immunizations:** The Public Health Law of New York mandates that every child be immunized. The parent/guardian must provide the school with a physician or clinic verified record or a copy of a school health record. Students will not be admitted to school without completed immunizations. Please refer to the New York State Immunization Laws and Regulations [to be found by clicking here.](#) (Updated 8/2019)
- **Medication Administration:** If a student is required to take medication during school hours, and the parent or adult designated by the parent cannot be at school to administer the medication, only the school nurse will administer the medication and only under certain conditions as per district regulations.

HOMEWORK & PROJECTS

As per CCSD Policy 4730, the purpose of homework is to support classroom learning through practice, pre-learning, processing, or checking for understanding. ([Refer to CCSD Policy 4730 by clicking here.](#))

Assignments are developed for specific purposes:

- to aid in diagnosis of student's needs, interests, and abilities
- to provide drill or exercise as needed in a particular skill: multiplication, spelling, etc.
- to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of a skill or understanding of a concept: solving problems, writing essays, or paragraphs, etc.
- to enrich or extend knowledge: reading assignments (long-range or immediate) in texts or supplementary materials, writing assignments on topics researched by students, media assignments (television, radio, newspapers) should all occur consistently to foster verbal, written, visual, and listening literacy
- to recognize individual talents or interests: creative writing, individual research, etc.
- to encourage inquiry and to establish that learning can and must occur outside of the classroom as well as in the classroom: long-term reading or writing assignments directed at individual students
- to extend the "classroom" by using television, newspapers, government agencies, town meetings, organizational activities, the arts, etc. as a means for students to form values, to differentiate facts, prejudices, inferences, and judgments and to more fully participate in society
- to prepare students to assume individual responsibility in proportion to the increase in such responsibility that comes with maturity.

Teachers will:

- clearly explain the homework assignment to students
- post the homework assignment
- check homework consistently
- assign work that is appropriate to the age, level and needs/interests of the student

- Teachers may differentiate assignments for students- particularly those with special needs and consider their accommodations

It is recommended that the time allotment for homework (in totality- for all subjects, including reading log) is as follows:

- Grades K, 1, and 2: On an individual basis if the child needs it
- Grades 3–4: 30 minutes per night, three to four nights per week or on weekends
- Grade 5: 30 to 45 minutes at night and on weekends if needed

Most homework assignments will be given Monday-Thursday. On occasion, assignments may be given on a Friday. Extended research projects may also be assigned over a period of weeks, in the upper grades.

Parents should:

- Establish a consistent, regular time for homework. A good routine is an hour of play after school followed by homework time before dinner.
- Establish a comfortable homework area. It may be at a desk or at a table. Make certain it is well lit and quiet.
- Have homework supplies handy. Keep paper, pencils, pens, and eraser near your homework spot to save time and avoid interruptions.
- Concentrate on the task at hand, and see individual assignments through before taking a break.
- Keep a calendar of long-range assignments.
- Check student homework assignment pad daily.

MEET THE TEACHER NIGHT

Each school has a “Meet the Teacher Night” early in the school year. It is intended to be an opportunity for parents to meet the teacher and see the classroom and curriculum materials. Because of the proximity to the beginning of school, it is not intended as a time for conferences about your child’s progress. The “Meet the Teacher Night” event for this school year will be **Wednesday, September 22nd, 2021 at 6:45pm. This will be a virtual event this school year.**

MOVIES IN THE CLASSROOM

Movies and video clips have an important place in instruction, particularly that of our evolving digital world. This resource may also be used during indoor recess as an option for students. As a school procedure, teachers using movies/video must abide by the following:

1. There must be a curricular connection made with the movies/video shown during instructional time. Unless it’s a very special occasion and prior permission is granted, movies for leisure should not be shown during instructional time.
2. Even if the movie/video has educational/curricular connection, teachers should make every effort to notify parents in advance if the movie has a rating of PG (parental

guidance). Teachers may not show movies with a higher rating than PG without written parent consent.

OUTDOOR RECESS CONDITIONS

The school will hold daily outdoor recess on our playground or fields unless there is a weather or safety related reason. Weather related reasons may include the rain, extreme cold (“feels like” temperature is lower than 32 degrees), or a significant weather advisory that could jeopardize the safety or our students. Safety concerns can be related to the school grounds or the immediate area surrounding our school. If the grounds are wet or covered in snow, we may call a “blacktop only” recess. Staff will adhere to the above criteria consistently so that we do not have disparity amongst the classes/grades. As per policy, we do not take away recess for disciplinary measures. However, if a student’s behavior poses harm to others or him/herself, staff can remove the student from the immediate setting, designate him/her to a specific area of the playground, or send the student to the Main Office for follow up on said behavior.

PARKING

Parking is prohibited in loading zones and fire lanes. Please do not park in front of the building, as the buses cannot get past your car to pick up students. Kindly use the designated parking areas and/or parking lot. Please do not park in assigned parking spaces.

PTA

PTA membership meetings are held during the school year. Notices are sent home prior to each meeting, and the dates and times are also provided on our District and Little Tor calendars. Little Tor parents have developed a very active PTA whose main goal is to maintain the safety and health of all students, while providing educational experiences which will enhance the learning of our children. Each child benefits from the efforts of the PTA. Therefore, we strongly urge you to join in this important part of school life. Your ideas and suggestions are always welcomed. Our goal is always 100% membership at Little Tor.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE DAYS

On specific days recognized as days of religious observance by the school district and when school is in session, the following regulations are in effect:

- Every effort will be made by teachers to schedule tests on days other than a religious observance day.
- Homework may be assigned, but students absent for religious observances on recognized days will have at least as long to make up the homework as a student out ill on the same day.
- Field trips and special programs will not be scheduled on these days whenever alternative dates can be schedule.
- New material may be introduced.

- No special penalties will be applied due to a student’s absence for religious observances on a recognized day.

Please refer to the district webpage and calendar for the specific dates of Religious Observation for the 2021-2022 school year posted on the District’s webpage.

REPORT CARDS/GRADING

Communication of student learning is one key to student success. Clarkstown CSD utilizes a Standards-Based Elementary Report Card. A standards-based report card lists the most important skills students should learn in each subject at a particular grade level. In a standards based learning environment, students receive marks that show how well they mastered each skill. Our report card is based on three marking periods. Teachers will use marking period rubrics to evaluate student progress. These rubrics will provide consistency between teachers and schools because all teachers will be using the same rubrics. Report cards will be sent home in December, March, and June. As in the past, interim progress reports will be sent home for all students not making satisfactory academic progress in their respective grade levels.

Report cards will be distributed on a trimester schedule. If a child is absent on the day that report cards are distributed, parents may pick up his/her report card in the office after school is dismissed. Report cards will not be sent home prior to the distribution date.

If a student receives special education services through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), it includes a great deal of information including evaluation results, present levels of educational performance and goals. IEP progress reports will continue to be distributed to parents on the same schedule as the report cards.

Trimester Dates:

Trimester 1 – September 1 – December 3

Trimester 2 – December 6 – March 18

Trimester 3 – March 21 – June 24

REVIEWING STUDENT RECORDS

If parents wish to review their child’s academic or formal student records, they may put a formal request in writing and make an appointment to review the student file with the school Principal.

SAFETY & SECURITY

The school staff is committed to ensuring a safe and secure school environment for students. We ask your cooperation by helping us to enforce the following procedures:

- For security purposes, all entrances to the building will be locked during the school day and after school hours, including the main lobby doors.
- ALL visitors MUST BE buzzed in by the greeter, security officer, or Main Office personnel both during the school day and after school hours when there are no scheduled after school activities.
- All parents and visitors must report to the greeter/security desk to first sign in, be issued a Raptor visitor pass, and then should report directly to the location which was communicated verbally and designated on their visitor pass.
- Community members may not use any area of the school playground during school hours. All community members are welcome to use our playgrounds when school is not in session. Please refer to the posted signs for further rules and guidelines in regards to our playground areas.
- Possessing articles, materials, toys, etc. or engaging in any activity, which may be considered harmful to the health, safety, and welfare of oneself or others is prohibited. Therefore, the use or possession of tobacco products, narcotics, alcoholic beverages, fireworks, firearms, weapons, knives, water pistols or other devices that can cause bodily harm is prohibited on school property and on school buses. Violation of these rules may result in disciplinary action.

SNACK TIME

Parents are requested to provide a nutritious snack for their children. Teachers at each grade level will specify the number of snack times that are provided for the classes.

SPECIAL AREA CLASSES

A well-rounded education is valued at Little Tor Elementary. In addition to our core curriculum, students also receive instruction in the areas of arts, foreign language (Spanish instruction), music, library, physical education, and technology.

SPECIAL EDUCATION & INTERVENTION SERVICES

Little Tor Elementary School offers a continuum of special education services in line with the CCSD Special Education Plan. We currently offer consultant teaching services (direct/indirect) and resource room. In addition, there are related services such as speech & language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and counseling. If the services are not available in the building, students can be referred to another school in the district or be placed outside the district to receive needed services. Referrals for academic intervention services (AIS) are made within the RTI/IST team. Referrals for formalized special education services are made in CSE meetings (initial meetings at district, annual meetings at building).

Academic Intervention Services (AIS)

Students considered “at risk” will receive AIS services. Such services include reading or math support, ENL (English as a Native Language) services, counseling services, and speech

and language services. Referrals for AIS services should be made to the RTI team after incremental and appropriate classroom interventions strategies have been attempted and documented. Students can also be referred for AIS programs based on performance levels on state and district assessments.

Instructional Support Team (IST) /RTI Team

The goal of the IST/RTI Team is to maximize individual student success within a mainstream classroom. The team is a vehicle for staff members to address concerns regarding children who display academic, behavioral, social or emotional issues.

STUDENT PICK-UPS

If anyone other than a child's custodial parent/adult is picking up your child from school, we must be notified of the person's name and relationship to the child in advance, in writing. You may authorize this for a particular day or for the whole year- depending on your need/circumstance. Please remind this person to bring their picture ID when picking up the student from the school as a staff member will check to ensure that we are releasing your child to the intended adult.

A quick reminder: Please refrain from writing a dismissal note for any child who is not your own. The authorization for dismissal can only come from the custodial parent/adult.

TOYS AND VALUABLES FROM HOME

For education and safety reasons, students are not permitted to bring toys to school. For special occasions or events, teachers may permit favorite games or toys. You will be notified by the classroom teacher of such exceptions. The school staff cannot be responsible for valuables which students bring to school. It is recommended that students leave all valuables at home, as oftentimes they cause unwanted student conflict.

VISITORS

(SUBJECT TO CURRENT COVID GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES)**

All visitors will be met in the front hallway by our greeter or security officer. You will be asked to sign in upon arrival and provide a uniformed piece of identification, such as a driver's license or passport. You will receive a special visitor's identification badge displayed during your visit to the school, which displays your name, picture, and intended location. This new procedure is designed to maintain the safety and welfare of all our students and track out visitors within the school building in case of emergency.

While we do our best to know all of our families, it is difficult to know every single person who comes through our doors. Also, there are times when we have a substitute greeter or security officer at the main door. Therefore, please carry your photo ID at all times to the school so that it can be presented at the request of the person at the front desk for sign in purposes. This is in a continued effort to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

VOLUNTEERS

(SUBJECT TO CURRENT COVID GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES)**

Little Tor Elementary School welcomes volunteers. We need your help and talents. At the start of the school year, you will receive a letter from the PTA soliciting your assistance and support. School volunteers are required to sign in at the office as a visitor. Please see visitor section above.

Little Tor Elementary School practices and protocol are aligned with the Clarkstown Central School District policies and regulations, which can be found at:

<http://www.ccsd.edu/domain/420>

Please note, all information included in this handbook is subject to change. District updates to the policy and regulations can be found online (BoardDocs and/or district website). Any changes to the school practices and protocol will be communicated to staff in writing.