



Livingston PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Carlos Gramata, Principal
Hillside Elementary School
A National School of Character

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Dear Hillside Families:

On behalf of our amazing faculty and staff, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2021 – 2022 school year! The start of each new school year always brings with it such excitement and enthusiasm, and we look forward to very soon filling the school's halls and classrooms with your children and their love of learning! While we have not yet fully realized what was once "normal", we are excited to begin the year with full days of school and a truer sense of school as we would like it. This year will undoubtedly be a special one.

I hope you had an opportunity this summer to enjoy your children and rejuvenate. My family and I had the fortunate pleasure of, once again, spending half of the summer in my parents' homeland of Portugal, where we enjoyed the beaches of the Algarve and northern coast, saw awesome sights, including two castles and a palace, ate amazing food and spent time with extended family. It was exactly what the doctor ordered after last school year and I feel invigorated for what will surely be another amazing school year ahead!

I want to take a moment to thank our amazing custodial staff, Mr. Brian Cappadonna, Mr. John Leitch and Ms. Eraina Armstrong, who worked tirelessly this summer to clean and move classrooms, unpack and deliver supplies and materials, and prepare our facility for the new year. The building is orderly and clean, and our teachers and staff have already spent a lot of time preparing their spaces for your children. In addition, I would like to thank our main office staff, Ms. Gina Ioviero, Mrs. Jennifer Schroeder and Mrs. Maria Scorciolla, who worked with me behind the scenes to prepare for the new year. Their support and dedication are greatly appreciated.

Special thanks to the district for funding a brand-new rock wall that was just recently installed in the school's lower gymnasium. This state-of-the-art piece of equipment will help support the goals of our physical education program and will be safely enjoyed by students for many years to come. Thanks also go out to the Hillside PTA, as the work of "Project Playground" began this

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summer with the repair of existing playground equipment. In the next phase of this project, we expect a new piece of playground equipment to be installed sometime in the next couple of months, and are excited to further showcase the fruits of our PTA's and families' fundraising labor! Thank you and stay tuned!

As you may already know, we are introducing a new elementary school schedule, which now features a five-day specials program, where classes will have a total of seven specials in a regular five-day week of school, including a new STEAM period. This new period will help to facilitate the work we have already undertaken in the past with our Maker Space and Crayola's creatED program. Generally, the schedule will provide students with increased time in all subject areas and we look forward to reaping the benefits of this increased time.

Finally, in the pages that follow, there are some general school guidelines that I ask that you please read carefully and save for future reference. The document provides meaningful information about general school expectations, including changes to attendance and lunch ordering procedures. Please do not hesitate to contact the school's main office or your children's teachers with questions.

Thank you and enjoy these remaining days before the start of the school year. We cannot wait to see your children on the first day of school! Go, Huskies!

Warm regards,



Mr. Carlos Gramata
Principal



Attention all Kindergarten families!

Kindergarten families are invited to join their teachers, principal and other staff members for a "Kindergarten Play Date" on Monday, August 30th, starting at 6:00 p.m. on the school's playground. This will be the children's first opportunity to meet their new classmates and play! We will also provide students and families with a tour of the building and student classrooms. "Class of 2034" T-shirts will be distributed, and we will take the group's first class photo!

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If you cannot make it for any reason, please do not worry. The first day of school will be here before we all know it and there will be many more opportunities for play and photos!

Note: In the event of inclement weather, the rain date will be Tuesday, August 31st. Same time, same place!

Attention New Families, Grades 1-5!

Please join us for a casual “meet and greet” on Tuesday, August 31st, at 3:00 p.m. Bring your children to come say hello, take a building tour, and ask any burning questions! We will meet you at the tents on the upper playground at 3!

Upcoming Calendar of Events/Activities

Monday, August 30: Kindergarten Play Date & Classroom Tours, 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, August 31: New Family Meet & Greet (Grades 1-5), 3:00 p.m.
Kindergarten Play Date Rain Date

Wednesday, September 1: First Day of School for Students! (Full Day of School)

Monday, September 6: Labor Day, Schools Closed

Tuesday, September 7: Rosh Hashanah, Schools Closed

Wednesday, September 8: Rosh Hashanah, Schools Closed

Friday, September 10: Hillside Summer Reading Logs Due to Classroom Teachers (see information on school site)

Thursday, September 16: Yom Kippur, Schools Closed

Tuesday, September 21: PTA Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, September 22: Picture Day

Friday, September 24: PTA's Outdoor Movie Night, 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 30: Back to School Night

Hillside Elementary School



Family Guide

2021-22

Parent Guidelines for Hillside Elementary School

Absences/Attendance

****NEW****

Daily attendance in school is expected if children are going to maximize their potential and make the most of what school has to offer them. However, if your children are expected to be absent or tardy from school for any reason, it is important that families report the absence prior to 7:45 a.m.

Livingston Public Schools now has the ability for parents to let us know if their children are going to be absent or tardy through your Genesis Parent Portal account. Please let us know each morning before school starts if your children will be absent or tardy along with the reason. Please note if a student is going to be tardy, you are still going to record your child as being absent, but indicate in the comments area that your child will be late and the estimated time of arrival. Once your child arrives at school, the absence will be modified.

You can enter attendance information in advance, and you can also record your children as being absent for up to 10 days in a row. The portal will display a list of all days you reported your children absent or tardy.

[Attached are the instructions](#) for this process. As a result of this new process, we do recommend that you change your password if your children know your Parent Portal password. You can do this by going to the "Settings" tab in the Parent Portal.

If you have any problems, please call our Technology Help Desk line at 973 535 8000 x2941.

Please be advised that days missed for family vacations during the school year are unexcused. Families should make every effort to schedule such vacations around days when school is in session. Please see the Academic Calendar available on the district's main page for information regarding breaks and days off from school.

Addressing Classroom Concerns

Parents who have concerns with classroom-related issues are expected to discuss them first with teachers. Most of the time, issues can be effectively addressed in a manner that is best for children with simple communication between parent and teacher. If matters do not improve, parents are then encouraged to reach out to the principal for intervention or additional support. Please note that classroom-related issues include minor issues at recess and lunch. Issues related to bus safety should be reported to the bus driver and the main office/principal.

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Arrival

Beginning on the first day of school, all students in **grades one through five** will assemble indoors in their respective gathering areas. Students in grades one and two will report to the upper gym and students in grades three, four and five will report to the lower gym.

For the first day of school only, weather permitting, Kindergarten students will assemble on the upper blacktop by the hill nearest the front loop where they will line up behind their grade/section number which parents will find painted on the ground (i.e., K-1, K-2, K-3). Staff supervision will not be available until 7:50 a.m., so parents or caregivers must stay with their children until they are picked up by their teachers. If this is not possible, please notify the main office at your earliest convenience (ext. 8150 or gioviero@livingston.org) so that other arrangements can be made to ensure the safety of your children.

Kindergarten children will assemble indoors in the upper gym along with first and second graders starting on the second day of school. Parents will not be permitted in the building and should drop off children at Door # 9. Assistance will be available to help escort Kindergarten students to the upper gym.

Please Note: In the event of inclement weather on the first of school, indoor procedures will be in effect for Kindergarten children as well. Parents will be made aware in advance via email and additional staff members will be assigned accordingly to assist with arrival as children enter the building. Parents will not be permitted to enter the building.

Two doors will be open daily for students to enter the building and staff supervision will be available at each. Door # 9 by the front loop (the “Kindergarten door”) and door # 5 by the lower gym (near the playground) will both open **starting at 7:35 a.m.** **Students must not be dropped off at school before that time as there is no supervision available.**

Parents must avoid entering the building during arrival through either of the aforementioned doors. If a visit to the office is necessary, parents must use the main entrance adjacent to the parking lot. There will be no exceptions. For reasons of safety and security, the staff members at either door will not permit any adult to enter the building through those doors. I thank you, in advance, for your cooperation and understanding.

The small loop at the front drive is not used as a student drop-off; unfortunately, it is too small to accommodate such traffic regularly. Families are not permitted to pull into the school lot unless a visit is planned. Those dropping off can either park off campus and walk children to the school’s property or drop off children at designated areas by crosswalks on Hillside Avenue, Belmont Drive, or South Ashby Avenue.

Please note that there are designated parking spots for visitors and that the traffic in the lot is ONE WAY only (bear to the right). **All numbered and marked spots are for staff only; the six visitor parking spots are located in the far-left corner of the lot and are not marked, thereby indicating they are for visitors. Parking in these spots for purposes of drop-off or pick-up is**

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NOT permitted. There is also a 15-minute parking spot for visitors to the right of the Handicap spots near the main entrance. This spot is for short-term parking only, as indicated.

Sometimes, in the event of severe inclement weather during arrival time, a green flag may be posted in a cone near the crossing guard on Belmont Drive indicating that the front loop will be open for student drop-off. Parents will also be notified via email the evening prior, whenever possible, but certainly by 7:00 a.m. on the mornings when this is permitted. Extreme caution is necessary when pulling into the school's drive on such days and parents must commit to making right turns only both into and out of the school's drive in order to maintain a healthy traffic flow. Please note that "green flag" days will occur very infrequently and during winter months only.

Bicycles

Students in grades 3-5 are welcome to ride their bikes to school with parental permission. Parents of such students must notify their respective teachers in writing if this is the case. Bike racks are available for students to secure their equipment. Please note that the school will not be responsible for bicycles that get damaged or go missing.

Birthdays

At Hillside, we love to celebrate birthdays! Student birthdays are announced daily and class celebrations are welcome. Parents who are interested in having their children celebrate birthdays in school must contact the classroom teacher in advance of the day.

Edible treats are strongly discouraged, but permissible, if they comply with the *District Wellness Policy* and classroom allergy restrictions. Please contact your children's teachers **and** our school nurse regarding both the policy and restrictions, and be advised that, ultimately, food may not be permitted depending upon the unique make-up of each class. In addition, anything with nuts is prohibited, home-baked good are NOT permitted, and store-bought items must be clearly labeled with ingredients.

In lieu of edible treats, parents are encouraged to send in non-edible items, like pencils, stickers, etc. Your children's teachers will also be in touch with you regarding birthdays and other possible alternatives to food items.

Birthday invitations for outside celebrations can only be sent into school for distribution if ALL students in the class are invited. Teachers will not distribute such invitations, but students will be permitted to do so.

Code of Conduct

The safety of our students and security of our schools are a top priority. Please be sure to read and review the *Livingston Public Schools Code of Conduct* with your children, which can be found in the Genesis Parent Portal.

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It is expected that children will behave in such a manner that is respectful of adults, other children, and of learning, and your cooperation and assistance is appreciated. All parents and/or guardians are required to acknowledge review of the Code electronically in the parent portal and must do so separately for each child enrolled in the school.

Devices

Students in grades K, 3, 4, and 5 will receive computer devices in class the first week of school. Students in grades 1 and 2 should have devices in their possession from last year. Devices should be brought into school fully charged daily. Teachers will indicate when it is not necessary to bring them back and forth. New students in grades 1 and 2 will be issued devices in school.

Dismissal

Students will be **dismissed daily at 2:37 p.m.** in accordance with the procedures that parents have specified in the Genesis Parent Portal. Children will be dismissed by their classroom teachers only at the following locations:

- Kindergarten and first grade: Dismissed from Door # 9 (“Kindergarten Door”)
- Second and third grades: Dismissed from Door # 7 (onto blacktop nearest the Media Center)
 - **Note: Mrs. Padilla’s third grade class and Mrs. King’s third grade class will dismiss from Door #8 onto the same blacktop area noted above.**
- Fourth and fifth grades: Dismissed from Door # 6 (door in the newest addition)

To avoid congestion at the “Kindergarten Door”, Kindergarteners will be dismissed daily starting at 2:30 p.m.

Students who ride the bus home or to aftercare at the JCC will assemble in the upper gym where attendance will be taken by a staff member, who will then escort them to the bus. Students who attend the YMCA aftercare will assemble in the upper gym where they will meet with YMCA personnel.

On partial days of school (“half days”), all students will dismiss at 12:00 p.m. Please note that lunch will not be served on these days.

Changes to regular dismissal procedures (e.g., grandpa is picking up the child one day after school) must be communicated to the teacher in writing via email or paper. A call to the main office is also recommended in the event that the teacher is absent and does not access email.

Permanent changes to dismissal procedures in the portal after the school year begins can only be made by office staff and should be communicated to them accordingly so that they can be reflected in the portal.

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Note: Upon dismissal, unsupervised children are expected to leave the property. All children must avoid engaging in inappropriate physical activity (e.g., rolling down our grassy hills, playing on steps, etc.) that may cause injury to themselves or others. Playing with sticks and/or throwing them in neighbors' yards is also unacceptable. Please be sure to discuss this with your children in advance of the first day of school. Your cooperation and assistance are greatly appreciated!

Genesis Parent Portal

Please remember to update your information in the portal so that we have the most up-to-date contacts, dismissal procedures, health information, etc., for your children. Since most communication from school to home will be electronic, please be sure to include an email address that you check frequently and check off the appropriate broadcast boxes. Parents will also access report cards during the year using this portal. Again, after the initial submission of information, parents will need to contact the main office to make any changes.

Lunch

****NEW****

Aramark Food Services will offer lunch starting on the first day of school. Through this program, children will have the option of choosing between a hot or cold selection daily. Of course, children are also welcomed to bring a bagged lunch from home.

As we did to end last school year, families will continue to pre-order lunches using [this form](#) that can also be found on the [school's homepage](#). The [September lunch menu](#) and all menus thereafter can also be found on the school's homepage under "Quick Links to..." by clicking on "Monthly Lunch Menu". Payments for lunch must be processed using your MySchoolBucks account. Please visit [this site](#) to access and/or create an account if you need one.

Please note Free/Reduced Lunch Applications are now available through the Genesis Parent Portal and must be returned as soon as possible directly to the Business Office at 11 Foxcroft Drive. As a courtesy, any family who qualified for free or reduced lunch last year will receive the same consideration until September 24, 2021, when new applications are due.

Medication/Confidential Medical Information Form

Parents whose children require medication during the school day must drop off any medication and related paperwork to the school nurse's office before the start of school. Hillside's nurse, Lisa Garamella, will be available for the drop-off of medication on **Tuesday, August 31st, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.**

If you are unable to drop off medication during this time, please contact our nurse, Nurse Lisa, directly at lgaramella@livingston.org to arrange a mutually convenient time for drop off. Note that students are NOT permitted to carry their own medication to and from school.

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All children must have a completed *Confidential Medical Information Form* on file. This needs to be completed in the portal before access to class assignments is granted.

Safety and Security

Visitors to the building will only be permitted to enter through the main doors adjacent to the staff parking lot. No other door shall be used for entry or exit. All visitors must sign in with the main office, wear visitor badges/stickers while in the building, and sign out in the main office before leaving the building through the main entrance (no other door shall be used for exit).

In addition, schools are required, as per state code, to conduct monthly fire and emergency drills throughout the year. Emergency plans have been developed and will be practiced and modified, as appropriate, to ensure that protocols are effective when responding to emergencies. Discussions with students are age/grade appropriate and it is our goal to maintain a safe, but comfortable learning environment for our students.

Local officials are frequently consulted with and are on site for these drills. Their feedback helps to inform our response procedures.

COVID-Related Safety Measures

With the understanding that we are still amidst a pandemic, we will continue with sensible and practical safety measures including the following:

- All building occupants will be masked at all times when indoors.
- Physical distancing will be practiced to the extent possible and practical.
- Weather permitting, lunch will take place outdoors so that students can unmask to eat. When lunch must be had indoors, we will ensure that students are six feet apart when unmasked and eating.
- Frequent handwashing and/or sanitizing will be encouraged and expected.
- Custodial staff will continue to sanitize high-touch areas frequently.

As the pandemic situation is ever-changing, we will adjust protocols as needed to continue to ensure and promote safe learning environment and healthy habits in our students and staff.

School Hours

****NEW****

School is in session on regular days from **7:50 a.m. to 2:37 p.m.** Doors open at 7:35 a.m. and student arrival takes place from 7:35 to 7:50 a.m. Parents must not drop off children before 7:35 a.m. **Children arriving after 7:55 a.m. will be considered tardy.** Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

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On early dismissal days, school opens at the same time as regular days, but is dismissed at 12:00 p.m.

On delayed opening days, school is delayed for two hours; doors open at 9:35 a.m. and children are considered tardy after 9:55 a.m. Delayed opening days end at the regular time of 2:37 p.m. (2:30 for Kindergarteners).

Summer Reading Challenge/Summer Bridge Grades 1 & 2

Summer reading logs are due **by Friday, September 10th**. Children who completed this activity and return the document will be recognized for their hard work at our sixth annual “*Back to School Pep Rally*” scheduled for Friday, October 8th. First and second graders who completed the Summer Bridge activity booklets should also return them to school by this date. Thank you, in advance, to all families who helped promote reading and the retention of important skills during the summer. Your support is appreciated!

Traffic Around Hillside

Hillside is primarily a neighborhood school to where most children walk either from home or from the designated drop-off areas on Belmont Drive, South Ashby and Hillside Avenue. Please be advised that drop-off directly on the property is not permitted.

Please accept the following reminders regarding general safety during morning drop-off and afternoon dismissal, which will help keep our wonderful school safe for all children:

- Remember to mind the yellow curbs at drop-off areas (Belmont Drive, South Ashby Avenue and Hillside Avenue) near stationed crossing guards. There is absolutely no parking (or stopping for an extended period of time) along these curbs. This will help keep drop-off traffic moving.
- Mind all traffic rules, including the speed limit and yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks.
- Avoid stopping in crosswalks and performing illegal U-turns.
- Do not pull into or block neighbors’ driveways. They do not like this and will let me know about it!

Thank you, in advance, for your assistance in ensuring the safety of all our beautiful children. Please be safe, patient, and kind to one another!