

HERITAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023 - 2024



20 Foxcroft Drive
Livingston, New Jersey 07039
Main Office: 973-535-8000, extension 8090
Fax: 844-852-5117

Website: www.livingston.org/heritage

This agenda belongs to:

NAME: _____

GRADE/ TEAM: _____

HOMEROOM TEACHER: _____

Board of Education

Mrs. Vineeta Khanna, President
Mrs. Pamela Chirls, Vice-President
Mrs. Jenissa Arnette, Member
Mr. Seth Cohen, Member
Mrs. Parul Khemka, Member
Jake Ferrans, Student Representative

Central Office Administration

Dr. Matthew J. Block, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Lisa Capone-Steiger, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Mark Stern, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Thomas Lambe, Business Administrator/ Board Secretary

HERITAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL VISION

The Heritage Middle School is tailored to the unique intellectual, social and physical needs of the early adolescent. We want every student to have a positive, safe, and successful school year and to feel good about coming to school each day. This will happen if you work with the school staff in a constructive and positive manner; take responsibility for your own learning, behavior; and decisions; give each and every class your best effort; ask for help when you need it; and treat yourself and others with respect and consideration.

This handbook provides information about the procedures, policies and rules that make learning and working together a positive and worthwhile experience for everyone. We have clearly defined the expectations and rules affecting students at Heritage Middle School. The rules, policies and procedures described in this handbook reflect the mission, goals and policies of the Livingston School District.

Heritage Middle School is YOUR school. We are a school community that takes pride in our programs, our staff and our students. We hope you learn to share this pride and take the opportunity to become involved in all that we have to offer as a middle school.

Both students and parents should read this handbook carefully and refer to it for information throughout the school year. Students are expected to use the agenda/planner section of this book as a way of learning time management and organization skills, and to assist them in setting goals and developing good work habits.

District Mission Statement

Empowering all to learn, create, contribute, and grow.

Heritage Middle School Core Beliefs

- All children can learn. The District's focus must be on making decisions that are in the best interest of the students, and that such decisions are preferably made through collaborative teamwork in an atmosphere of trust, respect, and open communication among all relevant stakeholders.
- Students must be prepared to live in an interdependent and competitive society by developing proficiency in the responsible use of technology and problem-solving and learning how to contribute to a democratic society.
- A sense of balance, acceptance, and emotional well-being is critical to the development of the whole child and to his/her achieving success as an adult.
- High expectations should be established and communicated to all. A supportive and committed community facilitates the achievement of these high expectations.
- Teaching is a reflective and dynamic process that can be provided in a variety of effective manners, requires a commitment to developing an understanding of emerging research and best practice, and demonstrates a willingness to take risks.
- Teachers, parents, other responsible adults, and peers serve as models for teaching, learning and citizenship.
- The District, students, staff members, parents and community will provide and maintain a safe, civil and sustainable environment in which to teach and learn.
- All stakeholders are valued members of our school community.

Heritage Middle School Phone Directory
Main Number 973-535-8000

Administration

Mr. Shawn Kelly, Principal	Ext. 8091
Secretary, Ms. Christina Woytas	Ext. 8091
Mrs. Kristin Fullam, Assistant Principal (8th grade)	Ext. 8090
Secretary, Mrs. Rosaria Tauro	Ext. 8090
Mr. Andrew Espinoza, Assistant Principal (7th grade)	Ext. 8090
Secretary, Mrs. Rosaria Tauro	Ext. 8090
504 Building Coordinator, Shawn Kelly	Ext. 8091
Anti-Bullying Specialist, Kristin Fullam	Ext. 8090

Athletics

Athletics Program Coordinator, YMCA Joann Browne	(973) 992-7500
Athletics Coordinator, Mrs. Nancy Mullin	Ext. 8862

Attendance

Attendance Secretary, Ms. Katy Connolly	Ext. 8092
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School Counselors

Counseling Office Secretary, Mrs. Lisa Appello	Ext. 8095
Mr. Danielle Maxwell (Grade 7)	Ext. 2941
Mr. Nick Guardabasco (Grade 7)	Ext. 6940
Mrs. Lori Balasic Grade 8)	Ext. 8099
Mrs. Kim Campbell (Grade 8)	Ext. 7350

Child Study Team

Mrs. Mallory Seidman School Psychologist	Ext. 8146
Ms. Barrie Satin, Social Worker	Ext. 7356
Ms. Samantha Halloran, Learning Consultant	Ext. 8139
Dr. Nancy Petryna, Clinical Counselor	Ext. 3001
Dr. Lauren Stern, LINKS	Ext. 8072

Media Specialist, Mrs. Susan Tannler	Ext. 8127
Ms. Diana Miranda School Nurse	Ext. 8145

District Directors and Supervisors

Supervisors' Secretary, Mrs. Martha Ackerman	Ext. 8883
Special Education, Ms. Shante Middleton	Ext. 8048
School Counseling, Mrs. Sinead Crews	Ext. 8137
Family Consumer Science, Tech Ed & Business, Mr. Robert Rolling	Ext. 8053
Language Arts, Mr. Kevin Wittmaack	Ext. 8038
Mathematics, Mr. Antonio Matheus	Ext. 8052
Visual Fine Arts (Art/Music), Ms. Mara Rubin	Ext. 8116
Health & Physical Education, Mr. Robert Grosso	Ext. 8174
Science, Mr. Brian Carey	Ext. 8078
Social Studies, Mr. Charles Raphael	Ext. 8049
World Language, Ms. Alexandra Marzulla	Ext. 8056

DAILY SCHEDULE

	PERIOD	ROOM #	TEACHER	CLASS
A	HR			
	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			
	6			
	7			
	8			
	9			
	PERIOD	ROOM #	TEACHER	CLASS
B	HR			
	2			
	3			
	1			
	4			
	5			
	6			
	8			
	9			
	7			
	PERIOD	ROOM #	TEACHER	CLASS
C	HR			
	3			
	1			
	2			
	4			
	5			
	6			
	9			
		7		

	8			
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I. HERITAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

In order to maintain a learning and working environment that is in compliance with state regulations and is free from harassment, the Board of Education has developed policies and procedures on affirmative action, equal educational opportunity, sexual harassment, and grievances. The Board of Education affirms that no student shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity of this district on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, affectation or sexual orientation, marital status, ancestry, national origin, place of residence, social or economic background, or disability. (Livingston Board of Education Policies 5750, 5751 and 5755)

Information about grievance procedures, Board of Education policy, and informational brochures are available from the building principal, the building Affirmative Action Officer, or the District Affirmative Action Officer. A grievance is defined as a complaint of discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, national origin, or disability. A middle school student who has a grievance should discuss the problem with a parent/guardian first. The parent and/or the student should meet with or contact the principal or affirmative action officer. Staff or pupils may file a formal grievance related to harassment on any of the grounds addressed in this policy. The affirmative action officer will receive all complaints and carry out an investigation and will protect the rights of both the person making the complaint and the alleged harasser.

The District Affirmative Action Co-Officers are Mr. Amro Mohammed and Mrs. Kristin Fullam. The District Section 504 Compliance Officer, Mrs. Lisa Capone-Steiger, Assistant Superintendent, who is responsible for compliance with the ADA/Section 504, which addresses the issues of accessibility to programs and facilities for handicapped individuals. The building level ADA/Section 504 Coordinator is Mr. Shawn Kelly. The building affirmative action officer is Mrs. Kristin Fullam.

Bias, Racial, or Ethnic Crimes

Students are cautioned against the use of any inappropriate or offensive verbal or written statements, pictures, or symbols directed to any members of our school community or made in a general or anonymous fashion. Any alleged incident of bias/racial/ ethnic crimes will be reported to the appropriate local/county police authorities and may also result in school-based sanctions. All school reporting practices will be in compliance with the law.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Absences, Late Arrivals and Early Dismissals

Students are expected to attend school every day that school is in session. Absences and tardies impact the education of both the missing student as well as all other students in the class. When teachers are required to remediate for absent students, it diminishes learning time for the rest of the class. Livingston Public Schools places a high emphasis on student attendance to ensure that all children meet state mandated criteria and to hold the expectation that every student will attend every day to assure maximum progress. **Board of Education Attendance Regulation #5200 states: A student must be in attendance a minimum of 90% of the school year in order to receive credit.** As such, a student absent more than **18 days of school** shall be subject to penalties up to and including retention. **Lastly, a student must be present for at least half (½) of the school day to be counted as present for the day. For Heritage Middle School, this equates to 3 hours and 35 minutes of instructional time.** (BOE Policy #5200)

Participation in co-curricular activities is a privilege. A student must attend classes regularly in order to be eligible to participate in these activities. **A student must be in school for at least 3 hours and 35 minutes in order to participate in extracurricular and evening activities.** All student absences, with the exception of those resulting from field trips, school activities, court appearances, administrative prerogative or exclusion and religious observances as defined by the state will be applied against the attendance requirements set forth by the Board of Education. Any questions or special circumstances regarding this should be directed to Mr. Kelly, Mr. Espinoza or Mrs. Fullam for review and approval.

Attendance Procedures for Truancy Determination

In implementing policies and procedures regarding student attendance, District Administrators shall first determine whether a student's failure to report to school is an "unexcused" or "excused" absence for determining truancy. The determination as to whether to grant an excused absence lies in the sole discretion of the building principal or principal's designee. In making this determination, an "unexcused" absence shall be based on the definition of a "school day" as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3. This section provides that a "school day" shall consist of not less than four (4) hours of actual instruction. The determination of whether a student's failure to report to school is an "unexcused" or "excused" absence shall also be based on the following six considerations:

1. **Student Illness.** If the child is anticipated to be absent for more than three (3) consecutive school days or a pattern of absence is suspected, **a written medical excuse must be provided by the child's physician** and verified by the school nurse. The parent or legal guardian must consent to allow for communication between their personal physician and the school physician for the purpose of verification. If it is determined that the parent or legal guardian meets the State criteria for financial hardship, the parent or legal guardian should contact the building principal to request assistance in obtaining the appropriate medical documentation. A student with a chronic medical condition should submit documentation to the school nurse for the possible development of an Individual Health Plan.

Your child must be fever-free for 24 hours WITHOUT FEVER-REDUCING MEDICATION before returning to school. Your child cannot return for 24 hours after any episode of vomiting or diarrhea. Do NOT send your sick child to school because there is a class trip or assessment. If you have any questions regarding your child's symptoms or questions concerning sending your child to school, please contact our school nurse. Additionally, please notify the nurse of any communicable disease such as strep throat, flu, stomach virus, chicken pox, etc.

2. **Death in the Immediate Family.**
3. **Extraordinary Educational Opportunities.** Educational opportunities include those tied to the student's course of study, and may not be of a duration which unduly disrupts the continuity of student instruction. These will only be considered for approval when a student has exemplary attendance. The "Request for Extraordinary Opportunity" form is available online under the tab on the district webpage for "Parent Resources." **Extraordinary opportunity forms must be submitted, two weeks prior to the requested date.**
4. **Excused religious observances.** Please see the State Department of Education website for the list of State Approved Religious Holidays.
5. **Provisions of an IEP, where applicable.** Matters concerning excessive absence or a pattern of absence shall be referred to the Child Study Team as needed.

Except in the event of an emergency, the parent or legal guardian must submit to the building principal or principal’s designee an advance written request that their child be excused from school, or from a portion of the school day, on a given date or dates for one of the reasons set forth above. This written request must be accompanied by any documentation that the parent or legal guardian wishes the building principal or principal’s designee to consider. Documentation will only be considered when accompanied by a written request. Where emergent circumstances prevent the submission of a written request in advance of the anticipated absence(s), this documentation must be submitted as soon as practical thereafter.

Attendance Chart for School Absences

UNDOCUMENTED	DOCUMENTED	ADMINISTRATIVELY EXCUSED (NONCHARGEABLE)
<p>The following items will be marked as undocumented, and therefore count toward the retention threshold of 19 absences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No note provided • Note not approved by administration • No note from doctor for 3+ consecutive days for illness • Truancy 	<p>The following items will be marked as Unexcused Verified and will count toward the retention threshold of 19 absences.</p> <p>Illness for 1-2 days as documented by parent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illness for 1-2 days as documented by parent • Illness for 3+ consecutive days as documented by a physician • Family Illness • Written parental permission as approved by the administration 	<p>The following items must be documented and will be listed on the attendance record for the student, but do not count against attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative exclusion or prerogative • Suspension • Court Appearance • Religious observance as documented by the parent and approved by State Guidelines • Death in the immediate family • Educational opportunities as approved by the administration • School-sponsored field trips • School-provided Home Instruction
<p>Consequences for Undocumented Absences:</p> <p><u>1-4 undocumented absences:</u> The administration will contact the parent to develop an action plan.</p> <p><u>5-9 undocumented absences:</u> The administration will contact the parent to review/revise the action plan.</p> <p><u>10+ undocumented absences:</u> The cumulative absences will be considered truancy and referred to the court system.</p>	<p>Consequences for Documented Absences:</p> <p>90% requirement for attendance, a student absent more than eighteen (18) days of school, regardless of whether the days are considered excused absences or unexcused absences, shall be subject to sanctions up to and including retention.</p>	<p>Consequences for Excused (Non-Chargeable) Absences:</p> <p>There are no consequences for Non-Chargeable Absences. The administration, however, reserves the right to deny field trips and extraordinary opportunity requests if the student does not have an exemplary attendance record.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">CONSEQUENCES FOR TOTAL ABSENCES:</p> <p>After 10 total chargeable absences, the parent will speak with the building administration regarding the frequency of absences.</p> <p>After 12 total chargeable absences, the parent will be requested to meet with building administration to develop an attendance plan/contract.</p>		<p>The absences listed in this column are not applied toward the attendance requirements for either class or daily attendance as stated in the Code of Conduct.</p>

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to manage their child’s attendance for the year. Automatic notification from the district will be sent to parents/guardians during the school year when their student has reached 10 combined days of absences/tardies/early dismissals. A second notification will occur when a student reaches 15 days. This is done to ensure that the school and the family of each student work together to monitor attendance and the completion of school work. If you receive a

notification, please contact your child's assistant principal, Mr. Andrew Espinoza for grade 7 students and Mrs. Kristin Fullam for grade 8 students.

This regulation is independent of Regulation #5200 relating to the calculation of absences for purposes of determining truancy. The **Code of Conduct** of the Livingston School District details the Board of Education Policy and Regulations. The complete policy and related regulations can also be found on the Livingston School District's website.

Tardiness to School

Students at Heritage Middle School are expected to be in school on time and to stay for the entire school day. Students are expected to report to their homeroom class by 8:20 AM. Dismissal for a regular school day is at 3:09 PM. Absences, tardies and early dismissals could be subject to the following disciplinary action and or interventions:

- **Central Detention:** Students who have **three or more tardies in any given marking period** may be assigned central detention. Continued excessive tardies could lead to further disciplinary consequences. Excessive tardies may result in a Saturday detention.
- **Principal/Assistant Principal Notification:** Students who accumulate a total of 10 chargeable absences/tardies/early dismissals shall be contacted by the auto-notification system via email. It is expected that the parent contact their child's assistant principal to discuss the nature of the frequency of absences/tardies/early dismissals from school.
- **Principal/ Assistant Principal Conference:** Students who accumulate a total of 12 chargeable absences/tardies/early dismissals shall require a principal/assistant principal conference to develop an action plan to improve school attendance
- **Superintendent/Designee Conference:** Students who accumulate a total of 15 chargeable absences/tardies/early dismissals shall require a conference with the Superintendent/designee.

Reporting Absences and Late Arrivals

In order to ensure the safety of our students, parents must report their child's absence or tardiness in the Genesis Parent Portal before their child's school starts for the day. This system replaces the "Call For Safety" procedure.

- [Log onto the Genesis Parent Portal](#)
- [View instructions for reporting a child absent or tardy.](#)

Reporting an Early Dismissal

All attendance reporting including absence, tardy, and early dismissal should be reported using the portal. Click [here](#) to view instructions for reporting an early dismissal in Genesis.

Anticipated or Prearranged Absences and Early Dismissals

Family vacation days are considered chargeable absences. Family vacations or trips should coincide with holiday periods scheduled on the district calendar. Scheduling vacation during regularly scheduled school time creates excessive stress for students as they must make up work upon their return while concurrently learning new subject matter. Parents are expected to discuss extenuating circumstances with administration prior to making such arrangements. Work will not be provided to students in advance of such trips. However, students should take advantage of assignments and information provided through teacher websites.

Early Dismissals

Early dismissal requests must be entered in the Genesis Parent Portal **before** homeroom. A link to entry instructions is listed above in the "Reporting Early Dismissal" section. The student must report to the main office to receive an early dismissal pass which is to be shown to the classroom teacher before leaving class for early dismissal. No student will be dismissed from class without the early dismissal pass. **The parent/guardian or person given written permission to pick up the student must personally sign out and pick up the student at the main office when leaving before 3:09 PM.** Students must go to the main office just prior to the stated early dismissal time. If returning later in the day, the student must sign in upon his/her return to receive a pass **BEFORE** proceeding to class or locker.

Students who are dismissed early due to illness must be evaluated by the school nurse prior to leaving the school. It is expected that our school nurse's evaluation is respected by our students and parents/guardians. Early Dismissals are counted as "tardies, half days or absences" for purposes of school attendance reporting depending on the time of dismissal.

Makeup Opportunities after an Absence

When a student is absent, it is the student's responsibility to obtain make-up assignments, complete them, and submit them to teachers in a timely manner in the interest of maintaining pace with the class. **Students who miss 1-2 days should submit make-up work within two days upon their return to school, or as arranged with the teacher. Any student who is absent for 3 or more days should submit make-up work within one week upon his/her return to school. If a student is absent for three or more days due to an extended illness, parents may request make-up work.**

Procedure for Requesting Homework

A student must be absent at least two consecutive days in order to request missed homework assignments. Parents should call the school counseling office at 973-535-8000 ext. 8095 to make such requests. Please allow a full 24 hours for homework to be assembled. Work must be picked up in the counseling office; it cannot be mailed or faxed. Expect daily homework assignments in each major subject. For absences of fewer than three days, students are advised to visit the teacher webpage for daily homework assignments.

Announcements

Announcements concerning special activities are to be written and signed by the activity sponsor. Daily announcements are posted in Schoology. For parent convenience announcements are posted on Schoology, please be sure to create an account to stay updated on all announcements. For athletic information, click on the activities tab, then select athletics. For announcements and updates, please see the link on the left-hand side of the page.

Entering the Building before School

For safety reasons, we ask that students try to arrive before 8:10 AM in order to be prepared for homeroom which begins at 8:20 AM. School is open with coverage at 7:30 AM for students participating in morning activities. Students may enter school early for breakfast, intramurals, for use of the Media Center, to receive extra help with written permission from a teacher or to attend a disciplinary obligation. Students in 7th grade will report to the auditorium; students in 8th grade will report to the cafeteria upon entering the building.

Staying After School for Activities and Events

The school day ends at 3:09 PM. Students may not stay after school unless they are participating in a supervised co-curricular activity, athletic program, getting extra help from a teacher, serving an extended detention or waiting in a supervised area. Students not participating in any after school activities are expected to be picked up, take a bus or leave the school grounds upon dismissal. Students attending after school athletic events are expected to stay in the gym or athletic fields during the event. Late buses are available Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday when school is in session and leave Heritage at 4:00 PM. Only students who are approved bus riders and involved in an approved activity are allowed to ride the late bus.

Building Security

For security reasons, all visitors must enter through the front door and are required to report to the main office upon arrival to obtain identification badges. All visitors must show a photo ID upon entering the building to a member of the main office staff. **Parents are not permitted to move about the school for any reason without arranging an appointment in advance and must follow the stated procedures for visiting the building.**

Cell Phones/Communication Devices/Phone Usage

The phone in the School Counseling Office may only be used during non-instructional time; before or after school and for school-related purposes only. To use the phone in the counseling office, students must present a pass from a staff member to any office personnel. **At all times, the use of cell phones is prohibited: they are to be kept in a student's hall locker and remain powered off.** Students may not text or call parents to pick them up early from school. Please see Early Dismissals for more information. If a cell phone is seen or rings during the school day, it will be confiscated from the student and brought to the main office where it will be held until the end of the school day. If there is a pattern established by a student with the use of their cell phone, a parent will be asked to pick the phone up in the office. In addition, violations of these expectations may result in a disciplinary action by the administration.

Camera-equipped cellular phones or similar devices may not be used by students as cameras during the school day within the school building, on school grounds, on school buses, in locker rooms or bathrooms. This expectation also applies to the use of cameras that are on district-provided electronic devices. **The transmitting, storing or sharing of inappropriate photographs on cellular phones or other wireless communication devices may constitute criminal behavior which will be reported to the proper authorities.** (BOE Policy #5516)

Dress Code

The Livingston Public Schools recognize that each student's mode of dress and grooming is a reflection of that student's personal style and individual preferences. The Livingston Public Schools will impose its judgment on students and parents/ legal guardians only when a student's dress and grooming are a distraction to other students' ability to learn through violence or drug-related references, inappropriately exposing their bodies, or affecting the educational program of the school. Students should be able to dress with current fashion trends, but in a respectful and school-appropriate manner. These standards extend to all gender identities.

The following dress code expectations apply to all students at Heritage Middle School:

- Clothing that is distracting or sexually revealing is not to be worn to school.
- Clothing that could cause damage to any student or school property is not to be worn.
- Slogans, patches, and emblems that are obscene or suggestive, depict drugs/alcohol, or promote gangs or violence are not permitted in school or at any school-sponsored activity.
- Hats, hoods and any headwear that are not for the purpose of religious observance may not be worn during the school day unless a student receives administrative permission to do so.
- Airpods and headphones are not permitted to be worn unless academically necessary, with permission of a teacher.
- Proper and safe footwear are required at all times. Students are discouraged from wearing flip-flops to school.
- A change of clothing must be worn in the gym and/or on the athletic field at the middle school level. Clothing worn while actively participating in physical education class is not to be worn in the classroom in schools where lockers are available.

Should students report to school in clothing which does not conform to the Dress Code, school staff will review the circumstances and determine the measures to be taken to properly address the violation.

These measures may include:

- A request made to change into appropriate school attire made by school administration.
- Parent/legal guardian being contacted to bring a change of clothes to school.
- School may provide a change of clothes. (T-shirts/Shorts)
- Parent/legal guardian student conference.
- Detention for repeated violations.

Emergency Closing/Early Dismissal

When school is closed or delayed due to inclement weather or when school has an emergency/ early dismissal, automated phone messages and a district-wide e-blast will be sent to families of children in Livingston Public Schools. Additionally, up-to-date information can be viewed on the Livingston district website at www.livingston.org.

- DELAYED OPENING: Opening Bell is 10:20 AM for Heritage Middle School.
- EMERGENCY EARLY DISMISSAL: Dismissal time is 12:45 PM for Heritage Middle School.

- EXPRESS HALF DAY SCHEDULE: Opening bell is 8:20 AM and ends at 12:45 PM. A modified lunch service will be available for any partial day schedule.

Emergency Drills and Procedures

Heritage Middle School has a detailed Emergency/Crisis Plan approved by the district administration and the Livingston Police Department in conjunction with the Essex County Emergency Management Office. We have a Crisis Team which reviews our plans and procedures on a regular basis to ensure that all precautions are taken for the safety and security of our students. As per state law N.J.S.18A:41-6, one fire drill and one security drill will be conducted each month throughout the school year.

For everyone's safety during any emergency drill, students are expected to be quiet during the duration of all emergency drills, follow all teacher directions, and comply with all security guidelines. Additionally, the expectation is that any visitor in the building will follow the protocols and directives for all emergency drills. Students who do not comply with emergency procedure guidelines and behavioral expectations may have administrative disciplinary consequences.

Fire Drill Procedure

Expectations include:

- When the fire alarm is rung, all students and staff – including visitors – must leave the building. An evacuation sign with a designated exit route is posted in each room.
- All windows and doors must be closed. Students must stay with their class and pass through the halls quickly and silently.
- When exiting the building, move away from the exits and doorways so that everyone will have an opportunity to vacate the building.
- Students and staff will remain outside the building until directed by announcement to return to class.
- Teachers have the responsibility to stay with their class and to have their roll book with them to verify attendance.

Lock-Down/Evacuation Drill

A lock-down or evacuation may be called for by the principal or her/his designee or by the Superintendent of Schools. Procedures and directives are in place for a lock-down, as well as the evacuation of the building. All teachers are trained in these procedures and copies of these procedures are provided for substitutes.

Hall Passes

Hall passes, signed by a teacher or staff member, are necessary in the following instances:

- Entering the building before the entry bell unless going to the cafeteria for early breakfast, extracurricular clubs, intramurals or to use the Media Center.
- Going to a locker, the lavatory, media center, or another classroom during the school day. (Students must also use the class sign out sheet both when leaving and returning to class.)
- An appointment in the main office, assistant principal's office, non-emergent nurse visits, or school counseling office.
- **FOR ALL OCCASIONS**, students must notify their teacher **before** going to the area for which they have a pass. Students who do not follow this rule are subject to disciplinary action.

Home and School Communication

Strong and positive communication between the home and school is a critical component in middle level education. We welcome and encourage every parent and guardian to become an active part of his or her child's school life. For current and important information, please check our school website (www.livingston.org/heritage) and ([HMS HSA Website](#)). Announcements, including school activities and any cancellations are also posted on our website.

The primary link and first contact for discussing concerns and questions about a student is the classroom teacher. **It is important that parents follow the chain of command in order to best address their concerns, beginning with the classroom teacher, team leader, school counselor and finally to the building administration.** Parents should contact the main office to speak with a teacher or leave a message requesting that the teacher contact them. Email communication is also an effective tool for good home

and school communication. Emails should be brief, respectful and focused on the issue at hand. Please be considerate with regard to response time from your child's teacher.

All teachers at Heritage maintain a website via Schoology in which you will be able to view assignments, upcoming events, study guides, field trip information and long term projects. Teacher's website may include things such as: study skill suggestions for their discipline, current topics and notes, practice questions or problems, blogs and reminders. It is the expectation at the middle school level that students actively interface with the school website and Schoology on a regular basis.

For questions and concerns other than classroom matters, parents may also contact their child's school counselor, the school nurse, child study team, team leaders or building administration.

Leaving Messages and Items for Students

Classroom disruptions interfere with teaching and learning therefore, the office staff will not interrupt a class to deliver messages or belongings to students unless it is an absolute emergency. Parents should drop off any messages or items for students in the main office. Students can pick these items up during their lunch period. There are two crates in the front office, one for the 7th grade and one for the 8th grade. Students know to come during their lunch to retrieve their belongings. We urge all parents to keep drop-offs to a minimum.

Lockers (Hallway and Gym)

Lockers are considered the property of the Livingston Board of Education and its schools. The school administration has the right to inspect any locker when reasonable grounds for a search exist. Parents or guardians should discourage their children from bringing expensive or fragile objects to school. **School personnel and the school district are not responsible for any damages, theft, or loss of personal possessions and property.** Each student is assigned a hall locker and lock. The student will be charged \$5.00 for a lost lock. Only school-issued locks are permitted on lockers. Students must learn their lock combination and not share it with anyone. Lockers are to be closed quietly and kept locked at all times. Lockers cannot be shared between students.

Anyone using a locker other than their own may lose locker privileges. Students are held responsible for any damage to their lockers by being assessed repair or replacement costs. Students are to keep their lockers clean and neat. Items may not be pasted or taped to the lockers. Anyone tampering with another person's locker will be subject to disciplinary action which may include police involvement.

Lost and Found

Items lost in the locker room or gym areas will be kept in the lost and found bins in the gym offices. Please see the physical education teachers for lost items. All other misplaced items are kept in the cafeteria, except items of value, which are kept in the main office. At various intervals during the school year, the general lost and found is cleaned out. Found items should be taken to the office as soon as possible.

Lunches

Menus with prices are posted in the cafeteria and are published on the school website. For the occasional forgotten lunch or lunch money, the office will issue a lunch pass for which free soup/crackers may be obtained. **Celebrations (parties) are not permitted.** Food and refreshments may not be delivered to the cafeteria during lunch periods. Pomptonian is the district's food management company. They can be reached at **ext. 8051 or ext. 8889.**

Heritage Middle School follows the Livingston School District's nutrition policies to ensure that our food selections are healthy. We also enforce the district's policy on Anaphylaxis to Food and Other Substances (#5331) to ensure the safety of all children. We encourage healthy and safe choices for all students. With allergies throughout the school, it is best for students NOT to share their food items with other students. Students should also be cautious about sharing lotions, creams, cleansers or sprays with other students. Young people may not know what reaction they may have to any of these substances.

Physical Education

The following rules and regulations ARE REQUIRED by the Physical Education Department for the safety and health of the students:

- Only sneakers may be worn on the gym floor - NO SHOES ARE ALLOWED. Students must dress for physical education classes in clothing appropriate for physical activity – sneakers and socks, gym shorts/sweatpants, t-shirt and sweatshirt for outdoors are required.
- Gymnasium lockers and locks are assigned during the first physical education classes of the year. Students are to keep their lockers locked and lock combinations private. Security of personal belongings and valuable items are the student's responsibility.
- Gym lockers are disinfected during vacation periods and all items must be taken home at those times.

Temporary Excuses: A note from home documenting an injury or sickness is given to the physical education teacher before class if the excuse is for less than a week. Students with exemptions are required to complete an alternative assignment during their scheduled physical education class from their physical education teacher.

Extended Excuses: Excuses for more than a week must be covered by a doctor's note which is given to the school nurse. The note should state what the doctor permits or limits regarding all activities.

Permanent Excuses for Exemption from Physical Education: A certificate from a doctor must be given to the school nurse at the beginning of each year for any student who is exempt from participating in physical education or requires limited activity.

Concussion Policy: All provisions of the district policy regarding concussions will be followed. (BOE Policy #243 1 4.)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Students excused from participating in physical education class due to injury or illness **cannot** participate in interscholastic or intramural sports nor any athletic activity scheduled for that day, evening or period of time.

Textbooks and School Equipment

Students may use a backpack or drawstring bag to carry their belongings during the school day. Books, equipment and materials that are assigned or loaned to students are expected to be cared for in a responsible manner. Textbooks must be covered and returned after use with a minimum of wear. Fines will be levied up to the replacement cost of any damaged or lost textbook or materials and school report cards may be withheld pending payment. Many of our texts have online access. Any requests for additional texts for home use should be made in writing to either Mr. Espinoza or Mrs. Fullam through the teachers, school counselors or through CST members.

Transportation

Bicycles

Students are permitted to ride their bikes to school and may store them with a self-supplied lock using the school's bike racks. Local ordinance requires students to wear helmets when riding bikes.

Bus Passes

Only students with bus passes may ride the bus. These passes must be carried and shown when requested. Lost or destroyed passes (up to 3) will be replaced upon receipt of a note from home and \$1.00. Bus students may get a temporary pass from the office (maximum of one per month). Students who lend or borrow bus passes will have their permission to ride the bus suspended. **Students may only ride on the buses to which they have been assigned. Parents may not give their student a note that they are allowed to go home with a friend on another bus.**

Bus Rules

The Livingston School District has established the following rules to safeguard all our students and to allow our buses to operate efficiently. All students must abide by the following rules:

1. Report to their assigned bus stop several minutes before the scheduled arrival time.
2. Drivers have been instructed to accept and drop off students only at assigned stops.
3. Observe the property rights of all neighbors walking to or from the bus stop.
4. Wait on the sidewalk or the edge of the lane, a safe distance from the bus, until it comes to a full stop.
5. Students who must cross the roadway to reach their destination shall cross in front of the stopped bus after the driver verifies that warning lamps are operating and indicates that conditions are safe to cross.
6. Board the bus without pushing or crowding and be seated quickly in their assigned seats.
7. Remain seated while the bus is moving and keep their books, lunches, book bags, instruments, and hands in their seat area.
8. Students assigned to buses equipped with seatbelts are required by law to fasten them. Failure to do so can result in immediate loss of bus privileges.
9. Keep arms, hands, and other parts of their body inside the bus. Throwing any objects out of the school bus windows will be grounds for immediate suspension of bus privileges.
10. Fighting, profanity, threats, weapons, laser pointers, drugs and smoking are strictly forbidden on the bus.
11. Talk should be in conversational tones and should not become boisterous, loud or obscene/offensive.
12. No food, snacks, or chewing gum is allowed on the bus.
13. Deposit trash and waste paper in the waste container at the front of the bus. Keep your bus clean!
14. Avoid large key chains or dangling objects to allow for unimpeded boarding and departing.
15. Do not tamper with any parts of the bus or bus equipment. If any seats are damaged, the cost of repair may be charged to the student assigned to that seat.
16. Remain quietly seated and await instructions from the driver in the event of an emergency. Students may be instructed to leave the bus and wait at a safe distance. Students are to fully participate in bus evacuation drills.
17. Cooperate with the driver and behave in a respectful manner at all times.

If a disciplinary problem should occur on a bus in the afternoon and the problem is such that, in the judgment of the driver, it is unsafe to proceed, the driver may return to school to seek immediate administrative assistance. Bus drivers are instructed to report any infractions to the school principal/ designee. Should a student be reported to the administration for violation of the aforementioned rules, disciplinary action will be taken that may include the loss of bus privileges or other consequences appropriate to the situation.

Vending Machines

Vending machines are for student use when remaining after school for activities and events. **Students may not use vending machines during the school day except when being used in the cafeteria during lunch.** Students MAY NOT carry or eat food in the halls or classrooms.

Visitors

Students may bring visitors to school only with prior approval. The host student must have written permission from their parent and from the parent of the visiting student. The student will then be given a form which must be signed by an administrator and each teacher approving the guest in their classroom. Approval of visitors must be completed at least one week in advance of the visit.

II. ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS OF STUDY

ACADEMIC and SCHOOL DAY INFORMATION

Academic and School Achievement Recognition

Honor Roll: To be eligible for the Honor Roll, a student must have a 3.2 grade point average and no grade lower than a "C".

High Honor Roll: To be eligible for the High Honor Roll, a student must have a 3.6 grade point average and no grade lower than a "B".

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

At Heritage Middle School it is understood that genuine academic and personal achievements presuppose academic and personal integrity. No matter how much pressure there is to achieve academic and personal achievements, one must never betray oneself or others by giving into that pressure and compromising one's integrity by cheating, plagiarizing or stealing. Students may never misrepresent the truth in order to obtain special privileges or grades.

Defining Cheating, Plagiarism, Forgery and Unauthorized Use of Technology

Cheating, plagiarism, forgery and unauthorized computer use is strictly prohibited.

- Cheating includes, but is not limited to; the non-authorized use of books, notes, crib sheets, copying from other students, inappropriate use of electronic devices to store or retrieve information, exchanging information in any form, and obtaining copies of examinations illegally.
- Plagiarism is defined as stealing or use without acknowledgement of the ideas, words, formulas, textual materials, on-line services, computer programs, etc. of another person as one's own.

Consequences for Cheating, Plagiarism, Forgery and Unauthorized Use of Technology:

- Student may receive a zero in that assignment/assessment
- A written assignment researching the consequences of cheating may be assigned.
- Other consequences can be given depending upon the situation.

ADVISORY/TEAM PROGRAM

The Advisory Period is designed to address general academic, social and emotional needs of students at the middle school level. This program is held on designated days and has a clear academic or social focus. There is an abbreviated schedule for these days.

Students at each grade level are part of a team of teachers who work closely with their students. Team teachers and students work together to build community and create a sense of belonging for each member of the team. Team teachers meet daily during common team planning and collaborate with other staff members to build a strong network of support for their students. Team Leaders meet with the building administration bi-weekly. Team Leaders are a valuable resource for parents to communicate with for extra help or guidance when a child is experiencing any difficulty or has a situation that can impact on their academic work, behavior, or confidence.

The following teachers are the Team Leaders:

7-1 Ms. Jamie Wolek	8-1 Mrs. Laurie Bisconti
7-2 Mrs. Alaina Burrows	8-2 Mrs. Martha Cuervo
7-3 Mrs. Katy Hreha	8-3 Miss Jessica Cumbo
7-4 Mr. Michael Carlin	8-4 Mr. Rob Rynone
Special Education Mrs. Brooke Newman	School Counseling: all school counselors rotate
Cycle teachers Mrs. Erin Magalhaes	PE Teacher: Mr. Roger Rubinetti

ASSESSMENTS

All assessment materials will be returned to students after they have been graded and recorded except for mid-term, final and benchmark exams. Tests/quizzes will be returned within seven (7) school days and projects/essays will be returned within twelve (12) school days. Assessments will be reviewed during class. Assessment grades will be posted on the PARENT PORTAL by the close of school two days after the assessment has been returned to the students.

The expectations of each course as well as the assessment practices of each teacher will be clearly posted on the teachers web pages.

ENRICHMENT

At Heritage Middle School, enrichment periods have been created to accommodate specific programs in Music, Art, Family Consumer Science, Business Applications and Technology and to extend and encourage student growth in literacy. Students who do not participate in a course during the Enrichment Period are expected to read for the majority of the period and will be permitted some portion of the period to complete independent work. Research on adolescent literacy emphasizes that students significantly increase their literacy and comprehension skills when they are simply engaged in reading. Students are expected to come into an enrichment period with an outside book, not a textbook. Students with a pass may use this period to get additional help from teachers. Enrichment may also be used for research in the Media Center. Special education teachers use the Enrichment period to give additional support to students on an as-needed basis.

For 2023 – 2024 school year, the Enrichment periods are:

8th grade enrichment is 4th period

7th grade enrichment is 6th period

Enriched Classes

Enrichment periods have been created to accommodate specific programs in Music, Art, Family Consumer Science, Business Applications, and Technology. Due to overwhelming interest in these courses, a lottery system is implemented to determine enrollment. Thus, students are asked to carefully consider whether they would like to participate in these programs. If a student no longer wishes to participate in an enriched class, the procedures below must be followed in order to drop the course:

- The request to drop a course should only occur after much thought and consultation have taken place.
- The change must be requested by a parent using the online schedule change form. On this form, the reason for requesting the change must be stated.
- Approval of all schedule changes is at administrative discretion.
- All schedule change requests must be received by **November 8, 2023**. No schedule changes will be made after this date.

GRADES AND PROGRESS REPORTS

Report cards will be available through the PARENT PORTAL on the dates indicated in the chart below. Middle school students receive traditional letter grades for all core curriculum, cycle, elective and health/physical education courses. **Grades for all assessments will be available on line through the PARENT PORTAL. Students and their parents can access and monitor their academic progress throughout the year.**

GRADING SYSTEM

A	93-100	I	Incomplete
A-	90-92.99	N	No Grade
B+	87-89.99	N/C	No Credit
B	83-86.99	P	Passing
B-	80-82.99	S	Satisfactory
C+	77-79.99	U	Unsatisfactory
C	73-76.99	WP	Withdrawn Passing
C-	70-72.99	WF	Withdrawn Failing
D+	67-69.99	X	Medical Excuse
D	63-66.99	Z	Exempt
D-	60-62.99		
F	59 and below		

The grading system includes pluses and minuses to more accurately report a student's achievement

(Note: the highest grade attainable is an “A”).

CALCULATING FINAL GRADES

Marking Period and Final Exam grades are converted from letter grades to a Grade Point Value (GPV) in Genesis. The GPV is then given a percentage weight based upon the marking period and type of course (full year or semester) in which it was earned. The products of those calculations are then added together and the Grade Range is then used to determine the final grade for the course. The information below shows how grades are calculated for both full year and semester courses:

Grade Point Value and Grade Range Table:

Grade	GPV	Grade Range
A	4.00	3.83 – 4.00
A-	3.66	3.50 – 3.82
B+	3.33	3.16 – 3.49
B	3.00	2.83 – 3.15
B-	2.66	2.50 – 2.82
C+	2.33	2.16 – 2.49
C	2.00	1.83 – 2.15
C-	1.66	1.50 – 1.82
D+	1.33	1.16 – 1.49
D	1.00	0.83 – 1.15
D-	0.66	0.50 – 0.82
F	0	0.00 – 0.49

Grade Calculation for a Full Year (FY) Course:

The final grade calculation will be based on the following percentages:

MP 1	25%
MP 2	25%
MP 3	25%
MP 4	25%

Grade Calculation for a Full Year (FY) Course with a final exam (world language and mathematics):

The final grade calculation will be based on the following percentages:

MP 1	22.5%
MP 2	22.5%
MP 3	22.5%
MP 4	22.5%
FE	10%

To calculate a full year final grade, the numerical value of each marking period grade is multiplied by .225 since it is worth 22.5% of the final grade. The numerical value of the final exam grade is multiplied by .10 since it is worth 10% of the final grade. These products are added together, rounded to the 2nd decimal place, and then matched with the Grade Point Value (GPV) and Grade Range Table to calculate the final grade earned. The following is an example of a final grade calculation for a Full Year (FY) course:

Grade	Numerical Value X Percentage	Product
MP 1: A	4.00 x .225 =	.9000
MP 2: B	3.00 x .225 =	.6750
MP 3: A-	3.66 x .225 =	.8235
MP 4: B+	3.33 x .225 =	.7492
FE: A-	3.66 x .10 =	.3660
	Total:	3.5137

***3.51 in the Grade Point Value (GPV) and Grade Range Table falls within the Grade Range of 3.50 – 3.82, which is an A-. Therefore, the final grade for the data above is an A-.**

The schedule for report cards for the 2023 - 2024 school year is as follows:

1	9/5/2023	N/A	11/8/2023	11/17/2023
2	11/13/2023	N/A	1/24/2024	1/31/2024
3	1/25/2024	N/A	4/9/2024	4/17/2024
4	4/11/2024	N/A	6/18/2024	6/26/2024

Back to School Night is Wednesday, September 27, 2023

PROGRESS REPORTS

Due to the implementation of parental access to student grade books, teachers will no longer send interim or progress reports for all students. Parents are encouraged to access their child’s grades on a regular basis. Teachers will have the option to provide comments to individual students should they choose to do so; however, if a student’s average at mid-marking period is below a “C-“ or if the student’s performance drops significantly, the teacher will notify the parent via progress report, phone call or email message.

As always, parents may request a conference with teachers to discuss the progress of students. This may be done at any time during the school year. To leave a message for teachers, call the main office at 973-535-8000 ext.8090 or use email.

FAILURE TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE COURSE WORK

The administration reserves the right to retain or request specific coursework for students who have failed to complete one or more core content subject areas.

SCHOOL COUNSELING

Heritage Middle School’s Counseling Program includes individual and group activities designed to help students benefit from the opportunities and experiences offered in and outside school. Our primary purpose is to help students help themselves. The homebase advisor, team teachers and the school counselors can provide a network of support to guide students through their middle years at Heritage. School counselors remain with their students from the time they enter Heritage until they complete middle school and transition into LHS. School counselors meet every week with the teams of their students to ensure that students’ needs are being met and information that the teachers may need to know is disseminated.

The School Counseling Department assists students in working through problems, issues and concerns that center around school, career information, educational planning, and interpersonal relationships. During personal conferences, the counselor assists students in identifying their strengths and weak points by discussing the student’s performance in school, self-management and organization skills, and overall adjustment to middle school. The process involves guiding students through problem solving and solution finding.

Students may make an appointment with their counselor by coming to the counseling office either before morning homebase or immediately after school. Parents may arrange a conference with a counselor by contacting the School Counseling Secretary, Mrs. Lisa Appello, during school hours at **535-8000, Ext. 8095**.

HOMEWORK/ ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Homework plays a vital role in developing good work habits and reinforcing learning. Completing homework regularly and assuming ownership of one's own learning are a part of a student's responsibility. Students are expected to use this agenda/ student planner for recording assignments and planning long-range tests and projects. Parents can support their child's development of responsibility and self-management skills by checking their child's agenda often. All assignments, assessments and projects are posted on individual teacher websites through the Heritage homepage. We encourage parents to check this frequently, but direct your child to check and download any information they need from their teacher's website.

Students who observe religious holidays that preclude studying and/or doing homework should request deferments from their teacher(s). Heritage Middle School follows the NJDOE list of Religious Holidays. The necessary considerations to accommodate the needs of these students will be available to them. (BOE Policy # 8810)

Guidelines regarding the extent to which homework will be included in calculating a student's marking period grade appropriate to the grade, course and level will be disseminated by each teacher at the beginning of the course. Homework may account for up to, but no more than, 15% of a student's marking period grade in any course. Homework must be submitted on time in order to be eligible for full credit. Requiring a student to get his/her parent's signature on an assessment does not count as a homework grade. Homework grades will be posted on a weekly basis by the close of business on the Tuesday following the week being reflected in the grade book, if not earlier.

As responsible learners, it is important for students to seek support and help from teachers if they are having difficulty in any subject. Teachers are available during the Enrichment period, after school from 3:09-3:35 PM, or in the morning before school as agreed upon between the student and teacher for clarification and support. Students need to secure a pass to meet teachers in the morning before school. School counselors can also be of help to students who are having difficulty with their work. They also host study skill groups to assist students with organization and management of homework.

HOME INSTRUCTION

A student is eligible to receive home instruction in core subjects by a tutor hired by the Board of Education if the student is to be absent for a minimum of 10 consecutive days or 20 accumulated absences. All requests of this nature must come from a doctor. A "Student Medical Certificate" form can be downloaded from the Heritage website under the Health office. Parents should also notify the student's school counselor.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

The Library Media Center (LMC) is open to all students for research, reading, quiet study and book exchange. Students have 24/7 remote access to a variety of electronic research databases from the HMS Library homepage at www.hmslibrary.info. The research databases are listed under the 'Electronic Databases' tab. The general log-in is: "**heritagems**" and the general password is: "**eagles**". There are some exceptions; please see or e-mail our Media Specialist, Mrs. Susan Tannler for more information.

Additionally, students are welcome in the LMC before school (M-F from 7:45 AM) and during their lunch period. Check the daily bulletin and listen to the morning announcements for changes to the schedule.

Students must have a pass to enter and use the library. Materials circulate for two weeks and fines are charged for overdue books (\$0.05/day).

Additional information about the LMC, its electronic resources, the library calendar, research tools and helpful links can be found on the library homepage at: www.hmslibrary.info.

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

Nurse: (973) 535-8000, ext. 8145

Health Forms available at www.livingston.org/heritage

A registered school nurse is on duty to administer first aid, conduct health screenings, administer medications and provide assistance to students who are ill and to provide information to assist students in maintaining wellness or in managing chronic and short term illnesses. Students who need to visit the nurse must have a pass from the classroom teacher. If a student requires medication during the school day, the nurse must have on file written permission from the parent and the physician.

The physician must provide written orders stating the name of the medication, the purpose of its administration to the specific student for whom it is intended, its proper timing and dosage, and the time when its use will be discontinued. Medication must be delivered to the school nurse by the student's parent or legal guardian and must be in the original container labeled by the pharmacy or physician. This regulation applies to cough syrup, aspirin, and all over-the-counter medications. These medications must be kept in the health office and be taken under supervision of the nurse. A student is only permitted to self-administer medication for asthma or potentially life-threatening illnesses and permission for self-administration must be provided.

TESTING DISTRICT-WIDE

Middle school students in Grade 7 and Grade 8 are administered the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA) for English Language Arts & Literacy, Mathematics and Science in the spring of 2024..

- All students in 7th and 8th grade will take the NJSLA for English Language Arts & Literacy.
- All students in 7th and 8th grade will take the NJSLA for Mathematics.
- All 8th grade students will take the NJSLAS for Science.

Details regarding the specific testing dates will be communicated to students and parents on the Heritage Middle School website. **Please do not schedule appointments or trips during this time or the week before.** Students need to relax and have the confidence that they are well prepared and will do well. Individual student performance reports of test results are mailed home to parents. A Math placement test for 7th grade students is given in March. World Language tests for 9th grade placement are given in January.

III. ATHLETICS AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

The middle school is designed to provide opportunities for students to participate in a variety of activities and programs. Morning and lunchroom announcements, website postings and signs posted throughout the school inform students of upcoming events and activities in which they can become involved in Heritage Middle School. Activities may occur before and after school and in the evening.

Intramural Sports

Intramural activities such as soccer, volleyball, basketball, flag football, etc. are open to all students before and after school at various times throughout the year. Students participating in intramurals will develop skills and compete in games. Schedules are available on the Heritage Website. Click on Activities, then on Intramurals on the left side of the screen. Additionally, announcements are made via the intercom, during student lunches, and in the gym.

Interscholastic Athletics

The HMS interscholastic program is run through the **West Essex YMCA**. The HMS interscholastic sports program is a 3 day a week competitive program that is open to all 7th and 8th grade students. It is a pay-to-participate program for all students who are on each team. Financial assistance will be provided to families who qualify. There are many sports that are offered throughout the year including; soccer, tennis, field hockey, cross country, basketball, volleyball, lacrosse, softball, baseball and track. Track and cross country are non-cut sports and have a reduced fee. Students should make sure to see the bulletin board posted by the cafeteria to view schedules and announcements. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the coordinator, or contact the Athletics Coordinator, Mrs. Nancy Mullin at ext. 8862

It is understood that budget limitations and roster restrictions may necessitate students being released or “cut” from an athletic program. We all agree that if this occurs, it will certainly be a difficult decision to make by the coach; however, coaches will always be considerate of the child’s feelings when conveying that decision to her/him.

Coaches will never post the names of students who have been cut on bulletin boards or in locker rooms. It is important for the coach to meet with the student before any general notification has been made to discuss with the student not only why they were released, but also to convey to them thoughts of how they may improve their skill level and any opportunities for doing so. Coaches will also provide students with information regarding possibly joining another team that has a “no cut” policy so that the child will have the opportunity to experience being part of the team and athletic program. School counseling personnel and other resources may be utilized to help students sort out their interests and skills and direct them to other opportunities including intramurals, town programs or other clubs and activities at the middle school level.

Medical Guidelines/ Forms for Athletics

Students who wish to participate in any intramural activity or interscholastic athletic sport **must have a sports physical completed** by a school physician or family physician **within one year before the tryout date for that sport**. Medical forms, sportsmanship forms, and emergency contact forms can be downloaded from the Heritage Athletics website. Students who have not completed a physical and the required permission forms cannot attend sports tryouts. Students may not participate in a sports event (tryout, practice, or competition) if they are absent from school on the day of that event. **For the 2023 - 2024 school year, registration for our athletic programs, intramurals, and interscholastic, is to be completed online. Please see the HMS website.**

Concussion Policy

All provisions of the district policy regarding concussions will be followed. (BOE Concussion Policy #2431. 4.)

Co-curricular Clubs and Programs

Heritage Middle School has many opportunities for students to pursue their interests. Student Council is the elected school student organization with officers being elected at the beginning of each new school year. All students are encouraged to participate in all spirit and service activities. *The Memory Book* (yearbook), Math Counts (math competition team), the musical production, stage crew, Diversity Club, Technology & Student Association and FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) are also examples of other clubs/activities available to students. Announcements for participation in activities and special events are made each day in the morning announcements. Our flat screen monitors in the cafeteria will highlight all events in a continuous loop throughout the two lunch periods. For more information please visit our website, click on Activities and then click on Extracurricular Clubs to see a description of the clubs we offer at HMS.

School and Community Service

Students at Heritage are actively involved in school and community service through their grade-level teams, Student Council, clubs and classes. Student Ambassadors (who serve as “buddies” for new students at Heritage) are just a few examples of our commitment to service. All student service opportunities must be approved through administration.

For a complete list of interscholastic sports, intramurals sports, clubs and service activities, please see the Heritage web page.

IV. DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

STATEMENT AND PHILOSOPHY

“Students Taking Responsibility”

Every student is entitled to a quality education within an environment that promotes respect, courtesy, responsibility and pride. School discipline should protect and nurture the physical, social, mental, and emotional growth of its youth. As each student progresses through the middle school years, greater levels of self-control and commitment to the school community are expected. Discipline policies and procedures serve to direct behavior and yet encourage personal effort extended toward self-direction. The following democratic principles and goals guide the administration of the middle school discipline policies and procedures at all levels and in all cases:

- All students have dignity and worth.
- All students have the capacity to learn cooperation and respect for self and others.
- All students should understand the policies that affect them, and be provided opportunities for individual growth and change while considering the welfare of the school community.
- Parents perform a participatory role with that of the school and its staff in preparing young adolescents for productive and fulfilling lives.

The goals of Heritage Middle School’s student discipline process are:

- To maintain a positive, safe learning environment for all students while providing support for those students who interfere with this process.
- To provide support and intervention structures for students who, for various reasons, demonstrate behaviors in conflict with the school community’s expectation that all students be courteous, respectful, and responsible.
- To utilize support and intervention structures designed to work *with* students and teachers in developing a caring community where mutual problem solving and interdependence are emphasized and modeled.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Heritage Middle School adheres to the disciplinary policies and guidelines stated in **The District Code of Conduct** set forth by the Livingston Public Schools. Every family is asked to review the Code of Conduct found on our website with their child and acknowledge it through Genesis.

Students in violation of this Code of Conduct will be administered disciplinary consequences. These consequences may include AM/PM detention, Saturday detention, in-school or out-of-school suspension or other consequences as deemed appropriate by the school administration. As set forth in the Code of Conduct, student behavior currently viewed as just cause for disciplinary action shall include but not be limited to any one of the following violations:

- Accumulated offenses
- Academic dishonesty, to include cheating, plagiarisms, forgery, and unethical computer use
- Any threat made against the safety and wellbeing of students or the school
- Assault and Battery
- Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying
- Chronic failure to be prepared for class
- Conduct dangerous to the physical well-being of others
- Cult, occult, and ritualistic activities that are detrimental to the school environment
- Discrimination
- Dishonesty
- Disrespect and/or disobedience to teachers or any other staff members
- Extortion, harassment or intimidation
- Failure to report to assigned classes while in the school building unless excused by a school official
- Failure to report weapons
- Failure to report other violations
- Fighting
- Gambling
- Gang activity or expressions of gang membership
- Group assault
- Hazing
- Horseplay
- Inappropriate physical contact with a student/staff member
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Littering
- Offenses off school grounds
- Physical or verbal assault/threat of assault towards a student/staff member (physical or verbal)
- Possession/control and use of communication devices
- Possession of laser pointer devices
- Possession, display, production, or distribution of indecent materials
- Possession, distribution, or use of weapons, look-alike weapons, or other harmful objects
- Possession, distribution, use, or being under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or anything that resembles drugs or alcohol
- Possession and use of electronic entertainment devices
- Possession of breakable containers
- Profanity, obscene language or conduct
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual misconduct
- Smoking or possession of tobacco products, devices used to smoke tobacco products, including vaping pens (e-cigs) or products that relate to vaping, lighters/matches in the school building, on school property, or to and from school; vaping devices of any kind are considered drug paraphernalia
- Standing by as others violate rules
- Tardiness and/or truancy
- Technology misuse
- Theft
- Inciting to riot or to fight
- Inappropriate student dress
- Insubordination
- Threatening and/or abusive language
- Trespassing
- Unauthorized sales or distributions
- Use of profanity
- Using threatening verbiage that could incite violence or create fear
- Vandalism
- Violation of fire regulations which includes lighting matches, making false fire report, arson, or the lighting of any flame not a part of classroom instruction
- Violation of School Board policy or school regulations
- Willful disruption of any classroom or school activity

DISCIPLINE PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

The expectation is that the classroom teacher will address minor disciplinary infractions. If there is a negative behavioral pattern evidenced by a student, the teacher should discuss that within the team setting and take advice from the team leader and other members of the team to best address the situation. If an issue needs further attention or the pattern continues, the assistant principal can get involved in resolving the issue. Serious discipline matters could require the intervention of the principal.

School counselors frequently can convey insight and direction to teachers or Team Leaders concerning student's behavior or attitudes. Please inform them of any situation that may impact on your child's academic progress or behavior. Their input is invaluable in helping develop the most appropriate response especially with serious behavioral patterns. Teachers, school counselors and the administration will make every effort to ensure that behavior and attitude issues are addressed promptly and effectively. Our goal is to ensure that every child has the support and strategies that are necessary to be an independent, responsible learner.

Classroom/Central Detentions

If a student is assigned an after school teacher detention, a one day notice is given so that students can make transportation arrangements. It is the student's responsibility to make the teacher aware of any special problems. For frequent lack of homework completion/academic issues or excessive misbehavior, an AM central detention or PM central detention may be assigned by the school administration. Students who are assigned AM central detentions are to report at 7:45 AM on the day or days assigned. Students who are late to detention will not be given credit for that day's detention. Students assigned a PM central detention report directly to the detention room from 3:09-4:00 PM. Teachers can assign personal detentions for missing homework assignments. Academic detentions from the administration may be given if homework remains a chronic problem (i.e., 3 or more missing assignments).

Saturday Detentions

Students who do not report to an assigned detention may be assigned additional detentions. Continued failure to report to assigned detentions can result in further disciplinary action, including Saturday detention. Saturday detentions may be assigned to students who have been assigned multiple academic or behavioral detentions. Students who are assigned Saturday detentions will be provided reporting information prior to the detention.

SUSPENSIONS

IN-SCHOOL

In-School Suspension is served during the school day. The student will report to the reflection room. ISS is a consequence given in order to allow students to continue to have access to counseling services during the suspension or from situations that require removal from a classroom setting but does not require removal from our school. School work will be delivered to the student by their classroom teachers throughout the day.

OUT-OF SCHOOL

Out-of School Suspension is recognized as the most severe form of disciplinary action with the exception of expulsion. A student should only be removed from the instructional program when the student has materially and substantially interfered with the maintenance of good order, or removal is necessary to protect the physical safety or emotional well-being of students and/or staff.

The assistant principal will contact the student's teachers in order to collect work that the student will miss during their suspension. The work will be available to be picked-up in the counseling office by a parent/guardian.

During the period of OSS, a student shall not be on or near the school campus or attend co-curricular school activities. A student who chooses to ignore this portion of the consequence will be subject to further disciplinary action including but not limited to arrest for criminal trespass.

The re-admittance conference must be held in order for the student to return to classes. This conference will be held with the student, parent/guardian, counselor, assistant principal and principal. This conference will be set-up at the time of the suspension.

RESTITUTION

Students may be required to make restitution to the school district or to individuals. Such restitution may include, but not limited to financial reimbursement, apologies, or school service. For further information about fines, refer to BOE Policy #5513.

POLICE IN SCHOOL

Police may enter the school if asked by school officials, if they suspect a crime has been committed or have a warrant for search or arrest. If a student is questioned by the police, school officials must see that all questioning takes place privately, in the presence of the principal or his/her designee. If the officer has a juvenile complaint or warrant, the principal shall request that the questioning be delayed, if possible, until the parents/guardians can be present. If the officer refuses, the principal must attempt to have the parents informed immediately, and shall remain with the pupil during questioning. (BOE POLICY # 5145.11)

DISCIPLINARY APPEALS PROCESS

It is best at this age for students to make an attempt to resolve detention and disciplinary issues themselves. If there are additional concerns, parents may contact a school administrator. The following is the appropriate sequence of contact to make an appeal:

1. The teacher/staff member who originally assigned the penalty, consequence or action.
2. The student's Assistant Principal.
3. The Principal
4. Superintendent of Schools
5. The Board of Education

Please refer to the District Code of Conduct for the appeals procedure for suspension.

V. LIVINGSTON SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES

LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY REFERENCES

*Please note that all policy information that is included in the student handbook is subject to change as the board of education reviews and revises them on a continuing basis.

Acceptable Use of Computer Network	#2361
Concussions	#2431.4
Electronic Communication between Teaching Staff Members and Students	#3283
Attendance	#5200
Immunization	#5320
Administration of Medication	#5330
Management of Life Threatening Allergies in Schools	#5331
Promotion and Retention	#5410
Reporting Pupil Progress	#5420
Harassment Intimidation and Bullying	#5512
Care of School Property	#5513
Use of Electronic Communication and Recording Devices (ECRD)	#5516
Substance Abuse	#5530
Student Smoking	#5533
Student Discipline/Code of Conduct	#5600
Suspension	#5610
Removal of Students for Firearm Offenses	#5611

Removal of Students for Assaults with Weapons	#5613
Expulsion	#5620
Sexual Harassment	#5751
Equity in Education Programs and Services	#5755
Transgender Students	#5756
Community Civility	#9131

The above policy references concern issues that impact, at times, middle school children. You can become familiarized with these or any district policies within the Livingston School District by visiting our district website. Once you are on the district website, click on “*Board of Education*” then select “*Policies*” on the pull down menu.

New regulations that enhance existing laws beginning 2011-2012 reflect changes in the New Jersey State law for the prevention of harassment, intimidation and bullying. The legal definition and the major changes in the law are listed below. A parent-and student-friendly question and answer section can be found on the next page LPS Policy #5512. This is followed by our new Substance Abuse policy and our Weapons and Other Prohibited Objects policy.

BULLYING/ HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS

Each school is committed to creating an environment in which students are free from bullying. Students are strongly encouraged to report incidents to the school administration. The school administrator will take appropriate steps to respond quickly and decisively to student reports of bullying. Students may use the Complaint of Bullying Form to report incidents of bullying. Copies of the Bullying Complaint Form are located in the school counseling department and main office. All teachers also have copies of this form.

Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is the use of electronic information and communication devices, to include but not be limited to, e-mail messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communications, internet blogs, internet chat rooms, internet postings, and defamatory websites, that:

1. Deliberately threatens, harasses, intimidates an individual or group of individuals; or
2. Places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual or damage to the individual’s property; or
3. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

“School district owned, operated, or supervised technologies” is any computer, networking system, electronic equipment, or any other equipment or device that may be used by a person to communicate to another which is owned, leased, operated, or under the control or supervision of the school district and/or school district staff.

Sexual Discrimination and Harassment of Students

The Board of Education prohibits acts of sexual harassment and discrimination. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment and discrimination, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a pupil’s ability to learn and a school’s ability to educate its pupils in a safe environment; and, since pupils learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment and discrimination.

All incidents of sexual harassment or discrimination should be reported to the principal immediately.

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING

New regulations that enhance existing laws for the prevention of harassment, intimidation and bullying are in place for the 2023 - 2024 school year. Please note that any revisions made to NJ Statute or LBOE Policy will supersede information contained herein.

The legal definition and the major changes in the law are listed below. A parent-and student-friendly question and answer section can be found below.

Legal definition - “Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus or off school grounds as provided for in section 16 of P.L 2010, CHAPTER 122, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:

- a. a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student’s property, or placing a student in a reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property;
- b. has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
- c. creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student’s education d) or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

Changes made to meet the requirements of the new regulations:

- A District Anti-Bullying Coordinator has been designated.
- Each school will have an Anti-Bullying Specialist and School Safety Team.
- Bullying incidents that occur off school grounds will be investigated if they disrupt or interfere with the orderly operation of the school.
- Any adult or student who witnesses an incidence of harassment, intimidation or bullying must report the incident to the Principal that same day.
- The Principal must inform the parents of all students involved in an incident of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Information should include the nature of the incident, what evidence was found, if consequences were imposed, and if services were provided to address the incident.
- Parents have the right to appeal any decision made regarding an incident of harassment, intimidation and bullying to the Principal, the Superintendent and the Board of Education in that order.
- The State will assess how effective Livingston Public School has implemented a system to prevent harassment, intimidation and bullying and the results will be posted on the district website.

ALL SCHOOLS WILL HAVE A CULTURE WHERE BULLYING IS NOT TOLERATED

Note: The use of the word “bullying” will refer to all acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Bullying will not be tolerated in any school, on school buses, during any school activities, on the way to or from school or at any other time that affects the operation of the school. To make this possible, the district has developed a system for reporting and responding to instances of harassment, intimidation and bullying.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY #5530

In order to assure the safety and welfare of students, staff, and other persons on school property or at school sponsored activities, certain substances are prohibited on any school property, at any school sponsored activity, or going to or from school or any school sponsored activity, regardless of where that activity takes place. The Board prohibits the use and/or consumption, possession, and/or distribution of any substance on school premises, at any event away from the school premises that is sponsored by this Board, and on any transportation vehicle provided by this Board. A pupil who uses, possesses or distributes a substance, on or off school premises, at any event away from the school premises that is sponsored by the Board, and on any transportation vehicle provided by the Board during or after school hours, or a student exhibiting symptoms of being under the influence or having a chemical abuse problem will be subject to the specific procedures, sanctions, disciplinary actions and due process provisions for violation of the Livingston Board of Education Substance Abuse Policy For the complete policy, please refer to the Livingston Board of Education District Policy #5530.

WEAPONS AND OTHER PROHIBITED OBJECTS

The Board of Education recognizes the need to provide a safe and secure environment for students and staff. Therefore, the possession and/or use of weapons, or other instruments which can be used as weapons are prohibited from school property, at any school-related activity under the supervision of professional school staff, or while en-route to or from school or any school function.

For the purposes of this document, weapons or dangerous instruments are broadly defined to include, but not limited to, those defined in N.J.S.A.2C:39-1f and N.J.S.A.2C:39-1r. A student found or observed on school property or at a school event to be in possession of a weapon or dangerous instrument shall be reported to the principal immediately. The principal will immediately inform law enforcement officials and the superintendent. Disciplinary action will be taken against students who possess, handle, transmit, or use weapons or dangerous instruments. As in all disciplinary cases, due process will be provided to the student. Disciplinary action imposed by the school may be in addition to sanctions levied by legal authorities. LPS Policy #5611, Code of Conduct, Page 23.