



**Parents Handbook**  
**2016-2017**

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## 2016-2017 PARENTS HANDBOOK

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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Long Ridge School is a diverse community of learners where children are respected as individuals with innate curiosity. We believe children flourish in a small, caring and academically challenging environment where learning is an active and joyful experience. We help children develop the skills, motivation, and values to become successful students, responsible people and lifelong learners.

We believe:

- Children should be valued for their uniqueness, ideas and talents.
- Children achieve their highest potential in a challenging academic environment that addresses each child's social and emotional development.
- Children learn in different ways and at different rates.
- Children should be active participants in their own learning; we encourage children to explore, experience and investigate as part of the educational process.
- The natural range of abilities and levels of development typical of young children are best accommodated in multi-age groups.
- Children learn best in an engaging environment where themes are relevant and meaningful.
- Interdisciplinary studies promote a deep understanding and mastery of the skills and concepts expected at each grade level.
- Children thrive in a rich learning environment that includes visual and performing arts, science, technology, world languages and physical education.

## GOALS

*To develop and master the following skills:*

- **Academic** - to prepare children for the demands of education after Long Ridge and to ensure self-sufficiency.
- **Problem-solving and critical thinking** - to prepare children for making independent, unbiased decisions; to express opinions about what they hear and read, to possess the higher-level thinking skills necessary for success in further educational and professional pursuits.
- **Communication** - to prepare children to express themselves effectively, comfortably and confidently in a concise, logical manner, using appropriate vocabulary or other forms of communication such as art, music or movement.

*To nurture and refine the following qualities:*

- **Self-esteem** - children who feel good about themselves succeed better in school, are willing to take risks, are not afraid of making mistakes, and are open to new ideas.
- **Love of learning and natural curiosity** - children have an innate desire to learn that, when nurtured, becomes a lifelong pursuit integrated with daily experience.
- **Creativity and inventiveness** - to enrich the way children think, feel and grow.
- **Independence, responsibility and self-discipline** - to ensure that children grow in self-confidence and lead happy, productive and fulfilling lives.

*To educate parents about LRS to encourage:*

- a thorough understanding of the school's educational approach, which will lead to support and enthusiasm for their children's school life.
- an ability to communicate the school's philosophy to others.
- a genuine community within the school.

## **THE LONG RIDGE SCHOOL HISTORY**

The Long Ridge School was founded in 1938 as a nursery school by Harriet Rowland. Classes met in her home on Old Long Ridge Road in North Stamford. Mrs. Rowland's educational philosophy was based on the premise that children learn at different rates and in different ways. Her program was devoted to meeting the needs of each child and valuing each child as an individual. These basic tenets have been central guiding principles of The Long Ridge School philosophy over the years.

Six children were enrolled in Mrs. Rowland's first class. The school grew larger each successive year and moved to space in the parish house of St. Francis Episcopal Church in 1949. In 1954, the school was incorporated as a non-profit organization governed by a Board of Trustees elected from the parent body and the community. Plans were made to expand the school. With funds raised from parents and the community, ten and one-half acres of land on Erskine Road were purchased. Land was cleared and the original building, consisting of five classrooms, was constructed; the school moved to its present location in the fall of 1957. Additions were completed in 1959 and 1972, and the second building was constructed in 1961. Our beautiful library, science room and renovated classrooms were completed in 1995. The 1997-1998 "Raise the Roof" project added a new pitched roof and mezzanine offices to the main building. Through a generous donation, four acres across Erskine Road were acquired in 2003, creating a new parking area and a nature preserve dedicated to long-time science teacher Josephine Wheeler. In September 2007, LRS celebrated the completion of the new Arts and Athletics Center and the school's 70<sup>th</sup> year.

Over the years, The Long Ridge School has maintained Harriet Rowland's vision of a school "designed to meet the individual requirements of each child in the process of growth and learning." In 1962 she wrote, "Our educational policies have grown over many years. They represent not only my own study and research, but also the efforts of our teachers and advising educators. We hope our program will be a living and growing plan." As The Long Ridge School begins its seventy-ninth year, we continue Harriet Rowland's "living and growing plan."

## **SCHOOL CULTURE**

In 1954, Harriet Rowland wrote that she had founded a school "where loving kindness would prevail..." We reinforce this concept with the motto, "We are all friends in school." Even our youngest students can understand that this simple phrase conveys that all members of The Long Ridge community, children and adults, are expected to be kind and respectful to each other.

## **STATEMENT REGARDING EDUCATIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

The Long Ridge School is not a special needs school and is not equipped to provide individualized educational programs for students with severe physical, cognitive or mental disabilities. The School does comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and will make reasonable accommodations to known disabilities of a student to assist the student in meeting the academic and behavioral performance standards of the School. Parents of students needing such accommodations should advise the Head of School, and the School will undertake an interactive process, involving the student's parents, health care providers, and school faculty and staff to determine appropriate accommodations. Such accommodations may include restructuring work assignments and modifying the testing environment. No accommodation shall fundamentally alter the School's educational program, and all students, regardless of disability, will be held to the Schools standards for academic achievement and personal conduct.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The Long Ridge School does not discriminate against any person in admission, employment, or otherwise because of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, physical or mental disability, or age in violation of existing state or federal laws or regulations.

## **SCHOOL ORGANIZATION**

### **The Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees is charged with the overall management of the school. Trustees include current and former parents as well as other members of the community. Committees of the Board advise the Board on various issues of importance to the overall growth of the school. Standing committees are Finance, Plant and Facilities, Development, Marketing and Long Range Planning/Education. Parents who are not Board members may serve on committees of the Board. More information about the Board is available in the By-Laws of the Corporation in the office.

### **Administration**

The Board of Trustees appoints a Head and an Assistant Head of School and delegates to them the full charge of the educational program and its administration.

The Business Manager manages the school's finances, budget, benefits and facilities.

The Director of Development coordinates and leads efforts to develop and expand the resources of the school including fundraising, publicity, and alumni relations.

The Director of Admissions and Financial Aid has responsibility for over-all management of admissions activity the financial aid process, and coordinates marketing efforts.

The Director of Technology is responsible for coordinating and overseeing technology throughout the school.

The School Secretary has all clerical responsibilities at the school, including acting as receptionist, assisting with bookkeeping, maintaining records and files, typing, and a myriad of other chores.

### **Long Ridge Parents Group**

All parents of children at Long Ridge are members of the Parents Group. The goals of the Parents Group are to support the school; to encourage parent participation, communication and enthusiasm; to provide enrichment activities for students; and to coordinate volunteers for fund-raising and other activities. Meetings are scheduled on different days of the week at 9:00 a.m. at school, and one evening is planned.

Room Parents are selected in each class to help coordinate parent involvement in school, class events, and the Auction, and to represent the class at Parents Group meetings.

## **THE LONG RIDGE SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT**

The School expects students to act responsibly, to realize that their behavior affects not only themselves but other students, teachers, and the total school community.

The School expects students to understand that behavior must be appropriate and to always use their best judgment.

The School expects each Long Ridge student to respect the rights, property, and person of others.

The School expects students to be considerate and courteous. This expectation is true at school and on class trips where Long Ridge standards are reflected to the public.

The School expects older students to be helpful and gentle with younger students. Members of the school community are all different, and these differences must be respected.

The School expects each student to be responsible for his/her personal belongings and to be prepared regularly with assignments and appropriate clothing and equipment for his/her classes and activities.

The School assumes that Long Ridge students are proud of their school and expects that they will take an active part in keeping it neat and clean.

The School expects that no student will bring anything to school or engage in any activity in school that is potentially detrimental to the health, safety, or educational well-being of himself/herself or others.

Disregard for the above guidelines is reason for disciplinary action up to and including exclusion from the School by the faculty and/or administration. It is important that students understand they are responsible for their behavior. Repeated occurrences of inappropriate behavior will result in more severe disciplinary action or, when deemed necessary by the administration, at the sole discretion of the Head of School, suspension or dismissal.

The School expects that parents will support the mission, policies, and goals as described in this Parents Handbook. We also expect that all members of the school community will treat each other with mutual respect.

## **The Long Ridge School Discipline Policy**

The Long Ridge School works toward creating a happy, warm and supportive environment where children can be enthusiastic learners. Each classroom has clear rules and expectations, often developed by the teacher with the students, to maintain an orderly atmosphere where children can learn. While the expectations may be expressed in different ways to children of different ages, the School expects that all Long Ridge students will observe basic rules of good behavior. The Long Ridge School Code of Conduct describes the School's expectations in detail.

Learning to work harmoniously with others takes time, experience and guidance. Long Ridge encourages children to be active learners -- to explore experiment, discuss, question and think. Of course, conflicts and differences of opinion arise in a participatory and stimulating environment. Therefore, the School encourages and teaches children to resolve their conflicts verbally. When conflicts or disagreements occur, teachers and/or the Head of School usually meet with those involved to discuss the situation, understand the causes and determine an appropriate resolution.

When students disregard or disobey classroom rules, they must realize there are consequences for their actions. Generally, a student will be reminded that his or her behavior is inappropriate and, often, is given the opportunity to correct it without further action from the teacher. Our goal is to have children develop self-discipline and to assume responsibility for their actions. Therefore, if the inappropriate behavior continues, natural consequences will follow inappropriate behavior. Students are encouraged to report to a teacher any incident of inappropriate behavior at the time so that the situation can be dealt with promptly.

Repeated occurrences of inappropriate behavior and serious violations of school rules must be treated with further consequences. Parents are informed about serious misbehavior and consequences and may be asked to meet with the teacher and/or Head of School about the problem. The School asks that parents support and reinforce the School's guidelines for appropriate behavior. Depending on the age of the child and the seriousness of the problem, consequences may include any of the following: removal from the situation, loss of privileges, lunch or activity time detention, work assignments, in-school suspension and suspension or dismissal from school.

The School's first priority is to maintain a safe, positive environment for all children. Therefore, actions that threaten the well being of Long Ridge students are the most serious. Verbal and physical abuse and sexual harassment are unacceptable behaviors. Children who harm or threaten to harm other children must realize the seriousness of their actions through appropriate consequences and discussions with the teacher, parents and Head. Inappropriate behavior that disrupts the learning of others is also unacceptable.

In the event the Head of School determines that it is not in the best interests of the student or the School for the student to continue at the School, the Head of School may suspend the student or require the student's withdrawal or dismissal. The Head of School's decision in this regard shall be final.

## **Inappropriate Behaviors and Consequences**

Examples of Inappropriate Behavior (this is not an exhaustive list):

1. Classroom disruption that interferes with learning
2. Rudeness to teachers or other students
3. Use of vulgar or profane language
4. Inappropriate use of computers, telephones or other school equipment
5. Bringing to school or using an implement that could be perceived as a weapon or dangerous to others
6. Damaging property of the school or other students
7. Stealing property from the school or other students
8. Fighting
9. Verbally threatening other students
10. Verbally abusing other students
11. Sexually harassing other students
12. Physically abusing other students
13. Use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco

Consequences may include any or all of those listed below:

1. Warning to change behavior (including a reminder of appropriate behavior or redirection to an acceptable behavior, depending on the age of the child)
2. Removal from the scene of the problem or class
3. Loss of privileges
4. Lunch or free-time detention
5. Assigned school service work
6. Parent conference
7. In-school suspension
8. Suspension from school
9. Dismissal from school

Consequences depend on the age of the child and the frequency and seriousness of misbehavior.

## **Internet Use Policy for Students**

We are pleased to offer students of The Long Ridge School access to our computer network for the Internet. To gain access to the Internet, all students must obtain parental permission and must sign and return this form to the school.

Access to the Internet will enable students to explore thousands of libraries and databases throughout the world. All Internet access is filtered through Dell's filtering system (Sonic Wall through US Computing) which blocks all unsuitable material. A list of blocked categories is on file in the school office. Students can only use the Internet under strict guidelines and with supervision. The students are not permitted to send or receive email, nor are they permitted to access social networks.

### **Internet Rules**

Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply.

The network is provided for students to conduct research. Access to network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Parent permission is required. Access is a privilege - not a right. Access entails responsibility.

Within reason freedom of speech and access to information will be honored. During school, teachers will guide their students toward appropriate materials. Outside of school, families bear the same responsibility for such guidance that they apply to other information sources such as television, telephones, movies, radio and other potentially offensive media. Please note that Facebook states in its "Statement of Rights and Responsibilities": 4.5 "You will not use Facebook if you are under 13."

The following are not permitted:

- Communicating with other students online via share, chat, or Google/cloud drive functions
- Displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others
- Damaging computers, computer systems or computer networks
- Violating copyright laws
- Using another's password
- Trespassing in another's folders, work or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources

Violations may result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### Website

The school's website [www.longridgeschool.org](http://www.longridgeschool.org) is a source for current news, information, school closings and photos, and should be checked regularly.

### Owl Notes

*Owl Notes* is a weekly calendar and newsletter which will be sent via e-mail each Friday to inform the LRS community about school events and activities.

### Class Webpage

Teachers communicate class activities, curriculum, projects, field trips, special events, requests, and reminders via their class webpage. Parents will be able to sign up for update notices that notify parents when a teacher has posted to the webpage. We encourage parents to visit the class webpage regularly as it is the primary source of information about each classroom.

### Communicating with Teachers

Effective communication between teachers and parents forms the basis of a supportive school experience for each student. Informal communications with teachers can be conducted in person, with a written note, a telephone call or an email. These communications can be about a variety of practical matters, including a change in the student's schedule, arranging a time to meet, etc. Teachers may not be able to read or respond to email messages received during the school day, but will respond at their earliest convenience. **Information or questions that are time-sensitive are best communicated with a telephone call to the school office.** Communication about a student's academic progress, social or behavioral issues and anything of a confidential nature must be conducted in person or with a telephone call, rather than email.

### Parent Conferences

Individual parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year as the main part of our reporting system. Additional conferences with the administration and the teachers may be arranged by telephone or at the office at any time. Long Ridge teachers are eager to communicate with parents, and telephone calls from your child's teacher will be part of our regular and informal contact.

### Reports

K-5 parents will receive two written progress reports: one at mid-year and one at the end of the school year. Nursery parents will receive one written report at the end of the school year.

### Procedure for the Handling of Concerns

For the day-to-day concerns of parents, the proper initial contact is the classroom teacher. He or she is in the most frequent and direct contact with the child and can institute any changes that are necessary. It is important that the communication between parent and teacher be direct, open, and centered on the needs of the child. Parents are encouraged to share their observations, questions and concerns with their child's teacher(s).

If the parent feels that there is a concern or question that needs further attention, the next step is to speak with the Head. A series of meetings might be necessary to clarify the concerns, the resources available, and the steps to be taken. A team meeting, including all of the child's teachers, may be appropriate, and other professionals may be consulted.

If parents feel their concerns still are not being addressed, it may be appropriate for them to contact the Board President to see if the proper policies and procedures are being enacted. The Board President should check to his/her satisfaction with the Head that the proper policies and procedures are indeed being followed and respond to the parents that this is so. At this time, if there is continued concern regarding policy or procedure, the Executive Committee of the Board might meet with the parents and the Head to discuss measures to ensure that the policies and procedures are enacted.

### **Permission Notes, etc.**

The school office must be informed of any change in a student's regular after-school transportation schedule by written permission note, email or phone. Parents must be responsible for informing the office of changes in transportation arrangements, before 2:30 if possible. No child will be permitted to use the school phone to arrange last-minute social visits.

No child will be excused from Physical Education, given permission to remain indoors during recess or excused from any other school activities, unless he/she has a doctor's note. In general, we assume if a child is well enough to attend school, he/she will participate in all activities.

Under no circumstance will a student leave the school grounds during school hours without permission of the Head or Assistant Head.

### **Snow Days and Other School Closings**

If inclement weather causes school to close, we will attempt to contact you by our phone broadcast system as early as possible. If no one answers, the system will try to leave a message on your answering machine. *Please note: the broadcasted message will not work on phones that have "privacy manager" or other call blocking services and may be impeded by other factors. It is important that parents also check the website, television or radio if the weather is uncertain.*

Information will be posted on our website, [www.longridgeschool.org](http://www.longridgeschool.org). If the Stamford Public Schools close, The Long Ridge School also closes. If Stamford schools announce a delay, the buses will begin their routes 1-1/2 hours later than usual. In the event of an announced delay, Beginners and Nursery classes will observe the same delay. School closing announcements are televised on Connecticut News Channel 30 and 12. You can log on to the Stamford Public Schools web site at [www.stamfordpublicschools.org](http://www.stamfordpublicschools.org) or [www.ctweather.com](http://www.ctweather.com) and follow the links "cancellations" and then "schools."

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Emergency Planning**

Students' safety is our primary concern. Extensive efforts have been made to provide a safe environment on a daily basis and also plan for emergency situations. A detailed "Crisis Handbook" has been developed for staff members to use in case of a wide variety of emergency

situations. Copies are available for review in the school office and library. We work with local fire and police officials to implement fire drills and other safety precautions with students.

### **Asbestos Management Plan**

In compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), The Long Ridge School has been inspected for asbestos-containing building materials and maintains an Asbestos Management Plan which is available in the office. All hazardous materials have been removed and remaining non-hazardous asbestos-containing materials are inspected twice yearly.

### **Health Regulations**

By law, teachers and staff are not permitted to dispense any medicine to children, including aspirin or aspirin substitute, without written permission from the physician and parent for the specific medicine and dosage prescribed. Special forms required for medication to be administered will be sent to all parents and are available in the office.

We recommend that students have physical examinations each year, and we would like to receive the results of such examinations, particularly where a previously undiscovered problem has been noted. The Health Department requires all new students and those attending the **Beginners Program, Nursery and Kindergarten** to have a physical examination before entering school. School Health Assessment Record forms have been sent to parents with children attending these grades.

All cases of contagious and communicable diseases must be reported to the school immediately. Parents of children who may have been exposed may be notified by a letter sent home with the child or other appropriate means, as recommended by the School Nurse and the Stamford Health Department.

Students may not attend school with a fever or other symptoms of a contagious or communicable illness, including coughing, sneezing or "runny" noses (not due to allergies). **Students must be fever-free (without Tylenol or other fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.** We reserve the right to send home children who may infect others with colds or other contagious illnesses. If your child becomes ill in school, you will be notified immediately. Obviously, a child who is ill may transmit his or her illness to others and also does not benefit from being in school while feeling sick.

### **Food Policies**

Food allergies have become increasingly common in school-age children, and we ask that parents notify us immediately when a child is diagnosed with food or other allergies. The Long Ridge School establishes food guidelines for each class each year, depending on the particular health needs in each class. **No nuts are permitted in any classroom or the lunch room.**

The lunch program for K-5 students is intended to be a service for students and parents but cannot necessarily meet every child's food requirements. We encourage parents to send healthful food for lunch and snacks. Organic milk and water are provided. Please do not send food for lunch or snack that requires teachers to heat or prepare. Students may not bring soda or chew gum in school.

If you plan to send a special treat for your child's class, especially near holidays, please check

with teachers first to help them monitor the amount of sweets being offered to students and to comply with food restrictions in the class. Class Room Parents usually arrange for appropriate special treats for holiday snacks. As part of our educational program, the school teaches and encourages healthful living practices, including eating healthy foods, exercising and participating in other physical activities, and practicing good hygiene such as hand-washing before meals, etc.

### **Allergies**

Parents must alert the school office and classroom teachers about their children's food or other allergies. If the allergies are severe, parents and the child's physician must complete the Addendum to the Medical School Form (Food Allergy Protocol) and an Authorization for the Administration of Medication in addition to the basic Health Assessment Record form. These forms must be completed and reviewed with the Head of School, office staff and classroom teachers prior to the beginning of school so that we can be fully aware of the necessary precautions and procedures to follow.

### **Immunizations**

State law requires a specified range of immunizations for every child attending any public or private school in Connecticut. This law states, "Each child shall be adequately immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps, rubella, haemophilus influenza type B, hepatitis B, varicella and any other vaccine required by the schedule for active immunization before being permitted to attend school. While certain exemptions are permitted for medical or religious reasons, they must be certified in writing by a physician for the medical exemptions and by the parents or guardian for the religious exemption.

### **Attendance**

If your child must be kept home for any reason, please notify the school office by phone early in the morning. Students who are absent during the school day due to illness may not attend after school activities. (Regular homework assignments will be provided for students who are absent from school due to illness.) Family vacations should be planned so that children do not have to miss school before or after a school vacation or anytime school is in session. K-5 students are expected to arrive at school by 9:00 a.m. when classes begin.

### **Animal Visitors**

Dogs and other pets are not permitted to visit in classrooms due to allergies or to be walked on campus fields or playgrounds due to health and cleanliness concerns.

## **SCHOOL LIFE**

### **Clothing, Personal Appearance**

Because Long Ridge is a school that recognizes and cherishes differences among individuals, a rigid, detailed code of dress, hair style, etc. would be inappropriate. All students should dress in a manner that is appropriate for school and its many activities. Extremes in appearance that would be distracting to oneself or others should be avoided. Clothing with objectionable or distracting words, pictures or symbols should not be worn to school. In general, all students should arrive at school "dressed to learn."

Please be sure your children have sneakers in school to wear for physical education and recess. Sandals, “cros” or dress shoes are not appropriate for these activities. During the winter months, children must be sent to school with adequate outer clothing, including warm pants and boots for snowy days. Students spend time outdoors every day unless it is raining or extremely cold.

**Please mark all** of your child's clothing, including hats, coats, sweaters, boots and mittens; it is easier for children to be responsible for their own possessions and to return lost items when their names are clearly marked.

## **Birthdays**

Children’s birthdays usually are celebrated in the classroom with a special snack (cupcakes, favorite fruit, etc.) sent in by parents. If possible, please inform the teachers in advance when you plan to send in a special snack so that conflicts with cooking projects and other events do not occur. We also sing “Happy Birthday” to each child whose birthday occurred within the month at a Friday Assembly. (July birthdays are acknowledged in June, August birthdays in September.) Arrangements may be made with teachers to celebrate summer birthdays during the school year.

Although we do not require or recommend that an entire class be invited to home birthday parties, we do encourage families to be considerate of the feelings of others. Therefore, birthday and other party invitations should not be handed out in school or travel arrangements made from school unless everyone in the class is included.

## **Holidays**

The Long Ridge School always has treasured the diversity of cultures represented in the school. One of the ways for children to learn about cultures other than their own is to experience some of the traditions, including holidays, of a variety of cultures. Throughout the school year, children learn about other cultures through planned classroom themes, special events, exchange programs, LRS parents and visitors.

Holidays are celebrated in a variety of ways from class to class, according to the ages of the children. On Halloween, all children are invited to wear or bring costumes to school. Masks are prohibited in Nursery, but may be worn by K-5 students when Nursery children are not present. The religious aspects of Christmas and Hanukkah are not stressed, but the customs surrounding each holiday are shared with stories, cooking projects and songs. On Valentine’s Day, students may bring Valentines for their classmates. National holidays such as Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents Day, etc., may be acknowledged through age-appropriate classroom discussions and at Friday Assemblies.

## **Homework**

We expect students to do school-related work at home including reading daily. The motivation for this may come from the child or the work may be assigned for a number of specific reasons. Although we expect the children themselves to do the work, parents can do much to encourage and help motivate them. If problems arise during the course of your child's home learning, please ask the teacher for guidance.

The following are guidelines for homework at each school level:

Homework is not assigned regularly in kindergarten or first grade. At times, children will bring home assignments that are intended to consolidate a classroom experience, to utilize the home or neighborhood setting, or to allow family members to help give an added dimension to a concept or project. In the second grade, children begin to receive homework assignments in a more formal manner. Homework is given in grades three, four and five on a more regular basis.

Homework is assigned:

- to strengthen the understanding of and to practice new skills.
- to reinforce classroom experiences.
- to develop study skills and to acquire the habit of doing school-related learning at home.
- to conduct special research or discussions at home involving the family.
- for fun, such as word-search activities or crossword puzzles.

It is important for parents to be aware of their child's homework. Assisting with or clarifying homework for a child is a natural and beneficial activity. If your child is having consistent problems understanding assignments, please let us know. Parents can help greatly by making sure that when their child leaves home in the morning all books, homework, etc., are in his/her possession. Parents may contact the school to receive homework assignments for students who are absent.

In general, we believe homework should help to reinforce, consolidate and extend classroom learning in an age-appropriate way. The amount of homework students should have has been the topic of much debate and research. The benefit of homework should not be measured by the quantity assigned. Homework in elementary school should not place an onerous burden on students or parents or be so time-consuming as to prevent students from pursuing other worthwhile activities and interests, such as music lessons and sports activities. We believe that all children benefit from some unstructured time each day when they can relax, play and pursue their own interests, in their time away from school.

## **K-5 Playground Rules**

Boundaries:

General: All students must be visible to the teachers on recess duty. The upper and lower baseball fields and the court are off-limits unless a teacher supervises there.

K-1: Upper and lower playgrounds, but not between the rocks and fence on the upper playground. Grades 2-5: Upper and lower playgrounds.

Off-Limits to All: Parking lots and areas, garden between the parking lot and music room, and areas behind the 2-5 building, teahouse, swimming pools and fences.

### **Rules:**

No fighting (kicking, hitting, bad language)  
No throwing (rocks, sticks, sand, snowballs, etc.)  
No toy or pretend weapons; no sticks except for building, digging or drawing  
No chasing anyone who does not want to be chased

All equipment must be used safely:  
Go down slides sitting up, feet first.  
No running up slides.

Lunch should be eaten inside. Food is not permitted on the playground.

Students are encouraged to stay on the playground and are not permitted to go inside without permission from a teacher on recess duty. (Students should be encouraged to use the bathroom before outside playtime.)

Students should be "in control" of themselves so that accidents are less likely to happen.

Older children should be helpful to younger children. Children may not exclude others from areas unless they are being uncooperative or disruptive.

All portable equipment (balls, sand toys, goggles) must be returned to their proper places. (Goggles, stored in the office closet, must be worn while crushing rocks.)

When the bell rings, students should go inside promptly.

### **Consequences:**

Teachers on recess duty determine natural consequences of minor infractions. However, a student who purposefully harms another student or disobeys a teacher must be sent inside with a report to the classroom teacher or Head of School.

### **Goal:**

Our goal is for all students to have a safe, happy and enjoyable outdoor time to play, relax, socialize and have fun!

### **Visiting**

We welcome visitors. However, we expect that visits will be arranged in advance with the Head, classroom teacher or by calling the office. Visitors must check in at the office before proceeding to the classroom.

### **Electronic Devices**

Students are not permitted to bring personal electronic devices, such as hand-held games or

multi-media devices, for use in school. If parents feel their child should carry a cell phone for safety or family communications, the child may bring the cell phone to school, but not for use during school hours. Students are permitted to use school phones to contact parents when necessary.

### **After-School Activities**

When students stay for planned activities after school, regular school expectations and rules apply. Students may not play indoors or outdoors unsupervised, before or after an activity. Students should be picked up promptly at the designated time. If a parent is delayed, please let the school know, if possible, and appropriate supervision will be arranged. A student who has been absent from school may not return to attend an after-school activity on that day.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Safety**

The safety of our students, families and caregivers is a primary concern, and we encourage all drivers to use extreme caution and to follow all safety guidelines and laws when transporting children.

Drivers should drive slowly and cautiously in the driveways and parking lots. Please obey signs indicating entrance and exit driveways. Arrival and departure times for various age groups are staggered to minimize congestion. However, the parking lots and driveways can be congested and dangerous, particularly at drop-off and pick-up times. Please take extra care in looking behind you before backing up.

Please refrain from cell-phone use while your car is moving.

Please make sure that children are secured by seat belts and booster seats, as required.

Erskine Road has a posted speed limit of **25 miles per hour**. We encourage all drivers to observe the speed limit on this narrow, curving residential road and to be alert for pedestrians, bicycle riders, deer and other wildlife.

### **Arrival and Dismissal**

School begins at 8:45 a.m. for Nursery and 9:00 a.m. for Beginners and K-5 students. Please do not drop off Beginners and Nursery students early unless you have made arrangements in advance with the classroom teachers. Before school care is available for K-5 students between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m.

Drivers who plan to spend time at school should park in the West Lot across the street.

Beginners and Nursery parents and caregivers should accompany students to their classroom and pick them up from the playground or classroom. Parents and caregivers of Nursery Extended Day who are waiting for older siblings to be dismissed are welcome to wait on the playground until 3:15, weather permitting, or use the library for quiet story-reading. Since nearby classes are in session until 3:15, the Big Room must remain relatively quiet and orderly.

School staff members meet K-5 students arriving by bus or car between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. They also escort students to their buses or cars at dismissal times. We ask that K-5 parents not enter classrooms directly to pick up children but rather wait in the parking lot driveway or in the hallway until classes are dismissed. At dismissal time, please pick up children promptly and supervise them until you depart. Students may not play on the playground unsupervised while waiting to be picked up. They must wait with the dismissal staff members on the front porch or in the office, until a parent or other driver arrives.

## **Buses**

Connecticut law mandates that each city or town must provide transportation to and from school for each kindergarten and older student residing in the city or town and attending an independent school within its borders, who lives more than one mile away from the school. A similar New York State law requires that students be transported to a school within fifteen miles of their home.

We expect that students will comply with The Long Ridge School Code of Conduct while riding a school bus as well as in school. We also expect that students will follow specific bus rules such as remaining seated while the bus is in motion and refraining from making loud noise or throwing objects, and other distracting or unsafe behavior.

## **Field Trips and Field Trip Guidelines at The Long Ridge School**

Field trips are planned throughout the year for K-5 students to enhance the curriculum, provide enriching experiences and take advantage of the many resources available locally and regionally.

**Parents are notified about field trips by class newsletters and *Owl Notes*.**

1. All drivers must observe The Long Ridge School Car Trip Policy (below).
2. Safety precautions to be followed:
  - a. Teachers will bring a first aid kit.
  - b. Teachers will bring necessary medical supplies for individual children (Epi-pen, e.g.)
  - c. Teachers will distribute copies of emergency medical forms to parent drivers (in an envelope) or carry the full set with them when traveling by bus as a group.
3. When possible, school buses will provide transportation, although there is no guarantee school buses will have accessible seatbelts (most do not). At times, for logistical and other reasons, cars transport students with parent and staff drivers.
4. Teachers will create a master list of drivers' cell phone numbers and leave a copy with the school office.
5. Specific information about food and clothing needed, arrival and departure times, etc., for each field trip is provided in class newsletters.
6. Students are expected to observe the same code of conduct on trips as at school.

## **The Long Ridge School Car Trip Policy**

1. All adults and students must be restrained by seat belts during the car trip. Students will not be permitted to ride in the front seat.
2. Use of a cellular phone while driving is prohibited. For safety purposes, each car will have a cell phone to use in case of emergency. Drivers are expected to pull over and use emergency flashers if a call must be made.
3. Vehicles must be in safe operating condition before the trip with enough gas for the trip.
4. Drivers must observe posted speed limits.
5. Parents must supply booster seats for their children who require them.
6. Parents who drive a group of students on a field trip are expected to chaperone them and participate in the scheduled program. (Occasionally drivers are only needed to drop off and pick up at the trip destination.)
7. No alcohol is permitted on any field trips—day or overnight—by either drivers or accompanying adults staying with the group.

## **SCHOOL FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

### **Annual Fund and Fundraising**

Participation in the Annual Fund by Long Ridge families is key to the continued success of our school community. As is the case with most independent schools, tuition fees do not cover the total actual cost of the education of the student. While approximately 75% of program and facility expenses are covered by tuition income, 25% must be generated from other sources. For the children at Long Ridge, the Annual Fund is a major source for this missing income, and we encourage all Long Ridge families, alumni, and friends to understand the need for additional funds and to give generously.

Because of family circumstances, we realize that some families will be able to contribute more generously than others. However, all contributions are extremely important and even the most modest gift is critical in helping us to achieve 100% participation by all Long Ridge families. Since we solicit donations from the community at large, foundations and corporations, our chances for receiving serious consideration by these sources are greatly enhanced by a presentation of total Long Ridge family commitment to the Annual Fund.

In addition to the Annual Fund, other fund-raising activities are planned throughout the year. These enjoyable events have the two-fold purpose of bringing families and friends together and strengthening the financial well being of The Long Ridge School. We encourage all families to support these events.

### **Payment of Fees**

A student's attendance at The Long Ridge School is conditioned upon payment of tuition and fees when due. A reservation deposit of 10% of tuition is due with enrollment contracts. First semester payment is due on June 1, and second semester payment is due on December 1. Parents who choose to pay the full tuition in advance are exempt from paying the 1.6% Tuition Refund Plan (TRP)

premium. A monthly payment plan is offered through Smart Tuition which provides for four, for Beginners or ten monthly payments, for N-5, with no interest charges and a small enrollment fee.

### **Tuition Refund Plan (TRP)**

Students are enrolled for the full academic year, and no adjustment of fees can be made by the school for absences, withdrawal or dismissal. This policy is necessary as the school has continuing expenses such as plant maintenance and faculty salaries. In order to plan and maintain these services for the year, it is essential that the annual income from tuition and fees is secured. Therefore, we have made arrangements to protect both the school and parents under the Tuition Refund Plan.

This plan will provide an allowance for tuition and fees in the event of withdrawal of a student for medical causes and in the event of withdrawal for other reasons or dismissal by the school. Parents should understand that the Tuition Refund coverage becomes effective July 1 in the event of a student's inability to attend school due to a medical reason, i.e., accident, illness or mental or nervous disability. The non-medical coverage (voluntary withdrawals and dismissals) does not become effective until the student has attended the first fourteen consecutive calendar days of the academic year.

The cost of the Tuition Refund Plan is 1.6% of the annual tuition and fee charges. Parents who do not pay the total annual charges by the first day of school must participate in the Tuition Refund Plan or present evidence of having secured comparable coverage elsewhere.

### **Insurance**

Student accident insurance, at a minimal cost, is required for all students. This covers all accidents on the way to and from school, at school, and on school-sponsored trips.

### **Financial Aid Policy**

The Long Ridge School is committed to a student body that is economically, ethnically, and socially diverse. Keeping our tuition as low as possible is one way the Board of Trustees tries to enable the broadest possible group of students to benefit from a Long Ridge education. The Board recognizes that tuition is a major expense for families and a significant financial challenge for many. As a small school without an endowment, we are proud of our relatively generous financial aid program. Awards are available for Nursery through Grade Five families and are solely based on demonstrated need.

Financial Aid is determined using the School and Student Service for Financial Aid (SSS), a division of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). Interested families submit a *Parents' Financial Statement* to SSS. Applications for Financial Aid are due by January 15 each year.

## **NURSERY SUPPLEMENT TO THE PARENTS HANDBOOK**

### **Arrival and Departure**

Please accompany children to the classroom each day so we are aware of their arrival. Please let us know in writing, if possible, when there is a change in your child's transportation arrangements (going to a friend's house, being picked up by a neighbor, etc.). It also is important to tell your child about any special plans.

While we do not expect all of the children to arrive and leave at exactly the same time, we feel

that it is important for children to arrive promptly and be picked up promptly. For many children, it is difficult to enter the classroom when they are so late that everyone already is involved in activities. Everyone knows it is no fun being the last one waiting to be picked up.

We know that saying "good-bye" is not always easy for children or for parents. We encourage you to stay with your child until your child feels comfortable in the room or is involved in an activity. The teachers will try to help make the separation as easy as possible. Once your child feels comfortable, it is important for you to say "good-bye" and leave promptly so that your child can focus his/her attention on school activities. We request that you do not linger in the classroom or outside in view of the classroom because this can be confusing and distracting to your child and to the other children. For many children, the school day really cannot begin until all of the parents have left the room. After the first days of school when separation takes longer, we assume that parents will leave the nursery classroom by 9 a.m.

Pick-up time for the morning nursery program is 11:45. While many children leave at that time, those who are enrolled in the extended day program remain. In order to make this transition time as smooth as possible, we offer the following guidelines:

1. Parents should arrive promptly to pick up their children. Each day, one of your children's teachers will have a clipboard to record who is picking up your child. Please let this teacher know when you are leaving with your child and inform anyone who is picking up your child to follow the same procedure. Please be assured that we never permit a child to leave with another person without your prior authorization.
2. Children should not resume playing in the nursery classrooms at pick-up time. (Extended day children return to one classroom for their lunch, and teachers prepare the other classroom for the afternoon program). Children may continue to play on the nursery playground, with their parents' supervision for as long as they wish to remain. Once parents arrive on the playground (or in the classroom on rainy days), they are responsible for the supervision of their own children.
3. The Big Room should not be used to serve children lunch or snacks at departure times. (The Big Room and the library are food-free zones except for special occasions). In addition, children should not be unsupervised or permitted to play noisily in the Big Room which may disturb ongoing classes in adjoining classrooms. Parents and children are welcome to picnic on the playground and visit the library to select books at dismissal time

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays are exciting, much-anticipated milestones in the lives of young children. In school, we celebrate each child's birthday with a low-key party at snack time. Usually, parents provide a special treat (cupcakes, the child's favorite cookies, fruit, etc.) for snack on the child's birthday. We do not feel it is necessary (or advisable) to invite the whole nursery class to birthday parties at home. (We request that you do not distribute birthday party invitations at school.)

## **Clothing**

We recommend that children dress in comfortable informal clothing so they feel free to participate in all activities without the fear of getting "good clothes" messy. Smocks are provided for painting and water play. We request that each child keep an extra change of

clothing in school. When buying clothes for your child, please try to select things that will be easy for the child to manage by herself/himself.

Outdoor playtime is an integral part of our daily program. We go outside every day unless it is raining or very cold. Please send your child with the proper clothing for outdoor play each day. To avoid confusion, all clothing, boots, etc. should be labeled with your child's name.

## **Conferences**

Conferences are scheduled with nursery parents twice during the school year -- in the fall and in the spring. A written report to summarize each child's progress is sent to parents at the end of the school year. We value ongoing communication with parents. Please do not wait for scheduled conference times to discuss your child with us. Let us know at arrival or dismissal time if you have any questions or concerns. You may call the school in the afternoon to speak with one of the teachers or you may request additional conferences with the teachers at any time during the year.

## **Snacks and Food**

A snack is provided each morning. We emphasize healthy foods such as fruit, vegetables, crackers, etc., for snacks. We usually plan a cooking project for snack time once a week. If your child has any food allergies, please let us know immediately. Children who eat lunch in school should bring enough food for an afternoon snack, too. (Milk and water are provided.) Please do not send food for lunch or snack that requires teachers to reheat or prepare. Children may not chew gum in school.

## **Toys**

We request that children do not bring toys to school from home. It has been our experience that toys from home are difficult to share or part with, and so children are sometimes unable to set them aside and become involved in school activities. Of course, some children have special security objects such as blankets or stuffed animals that help them feel comfortable in new situations. When necessary, children may bring such special security objects to school and store them safely in their bins during school time. Children may bring souvenirs or interesting objects from trips or nature walks, art projects made at home, books, or other special treasures.

## **NURSERY AND BEGINNERS HEALTH POLICY**

We realize it can be difficult to know whether or not your child is well enough to attend school on some days. In conjunction with recommendations from pediatricians, we have written a health policy which clearly defines whether or not a child may attend school. Of course, please consult your own pediatrician when in doubt about your child's health.

### **Fever**

A child with a temperature above 100.00 should be kept at home to rest and allow his/her body to fight the illness. Keeping the child at home will not only prevent spreading the infection to other

children but will also enable your child's immune system to gain strength.

#### Nasal Discharge

When nasal discharge is not clear and is combined with other cold symptoms such as a cough or sore throat, etc., please keep your child home.

#### Conjunctivitis

If your child has yellow discharge running from his/her eye, it is likely that he/she has a contagious illness called conjunctivitis or "pink-eye." The child should see a physician, and if eye medication is necessary, he/she should be on the medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

#### Chicken Pox

A child with chicken pox may return to school after the last lesion has developed a scab. The child is contagious before the first lesion even develops and while the blisters are visible. Children who have been inoculated against chicken pox may still develop mild cases.

#### Antibiotics

If your child is receiving an antibiotic for an infectious illness such as strep throat, he/she may return to school once he/she has been on antibiotics for at least 24 to 48 hours, assuming he/she has the strength and the energy to participate in school activities.

## NOTES







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