

Durban Avenue School



“Where Learning Begins”

**Parent Handbook
2026 - 2027**

Welcome to the 2026 - 2027 School Year!

This handbook has been designed to assist you throughout the year. If you have additional questions or need clarification, please do not hesitate to call the main office (973) 398–8805. My door is always open. Please do not hesitate to contact me. We look forward to working with you and your child this year.

Katherine McFadden

Principal
Durban Avenue School

WHOSE CHILD IS THIS?

Author Unknown

"Whose child is this?" I asked one day
Seeing a little one out at play
"Mine", said the parent with a tender smile
"Mine to keep a little while
To bathe his hands and comb his hair
To tell him what he is to wear
To prepare him that he may always be good
And each day do the things he should."

"Whose child is this?" I asked again
As the door opened and someone came in
"Mine", said the teacher with the same tender smile
"Mine, to keep just for a little while
To teach him how to be gentle and kind
To train and direct his dear little mind
To help him live by every rule
And get the best he can from school."

"Whose child is this?" I ask once more
Just as the little one entered the door
"Ours" said the parent and the teacher as they smiled
And each took the hand of the little child
"Ours to love and train together
Ours this blessed task forever."

Absences

Please adhere to the following procedure when your child will be absent from school. If your child is going to be absent, you are to telephone the attendance office at (973) 770-8888 and leave a message on our answering machine. All calls must be made prior to 8:30 AM. The answering machine will be checked at this time. **It is imperative that you call before this time.** The reporting of an absence by parents is requested in order to assure the safety of the students. If you do not call in an absence, you will be called at home, then at work. If we are unable to contact you, we will then call your listed emergency numbers to try to locate the child. **To avoid unnecessary phone calls, please call in all absences.** We must work together in order for this procedure to work effectively.

Absences - Excused/Unexcused

In response to recent changes to New Jersey Code (NJSA18A), the Hopatcong School District has revised some of its policies relating to student attendance in schools.

Effective immediately, a pupil returning to school from an absence of any length **MUST** present a written statement to the teacher, dated and signed by the parent or guardian, explaining the reason for the absence. Any pupil who is absent for more than three consecutive days must submit a doctor's note explaining the reason for the absence.

Any absences not documented by a parent/doctor's note will be considered **unexcused**. In accordance with provisions in NJAC6A:16-11 and NJSA18A:38-28, cumulative unexcused absences will be subject to continual review and may result in a referral to DCPD, Division of Child Protection and Permanency, (formerly DYFS, the Division of Youth and Family Services) or the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts.

Your careful attention to these regulations is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions or concerns about the Hopatcong Borough Schools attendance policies, please contact the main office.

AlphaBest Extended Day

AlphaBest is a program that supplements school-day learning in a fun, engaging way, focusing on cutting-edge learning themes. It is available for Kindergarten and 1st Grade students before school beginning at 6:30 AM and after school until 6:00 PM. **AlphaBest is only available at Durban Avenue School on weeks when your child is in session.** For more information regarding AlphaBest, please visit www.alphabest.org/hopatcong.

Arrival Times

If you choose to drop off your child at Durban Avenue School, you must adhere to the following drop off times:

All Grades - 8:25 AM - 8:40 AM

Please strictly adhere to these drop-off times as supervision does not begin until these designated times. No parent or student will be allowed in the building before the drop-off times listed above as this is when supervision will begin. Please understand that if you arrive early, you will have to remain outside until school officially begins. This practice will be strictly enforced and your cooperation is greatly appreciated. While it is your choice to drive your child to and from school, for safety reasons, it is strongly encouraged that he/she be transported by bus if one is provided.

Asbestos Notification

Federal regulations require all public school districts to inspect all known asbestos containing building materials at least once every six months and to inform employees and other building occupants of activities involving asbestos containing building materials which have occurred in the past year.

Every three years, all asbestos material must be reevaluated as part of the inspection process. As always, the health and safety of students, staff and parents remain our primary goal. The Asbestos Management Plans are available for review by appointment, during regular business hours by contacting Gregory Smyth, Facilities Supervisor at 973-770-8840.

Attendance Regulations - NJ Code

Our attendance policy has been updated to reflect changes in New Jersey Code regulations.

- 1 After 7 absences, an automated email will be sent to parents/guardians for verification purposes.
- 2 After 12 absences, an automated email will be sent regarding a possible parent conference as well as notification of a possible court summons.
- 3 As of the eighteenth absence, the district is required to submit a court referral. A waiver of this requirement may be granted following a review of the nature and causes of the absences.

Bicycles

Bicycling to school at this level is not permissible to ensure the safety of our students. Your cooperation regarding this matter is greatly appreciated.

Birthdays

Student birthdays are announced daily on the morning announcements. We will be announcing summer birthdays during the half birthday. For example, a July 10th birthday will be announced on January 10th. If you would like to send in something to celebrate your child's special day, please plan this ahead of time with your child's teacher. This year we will not have edible birthday treats. Non-food items are allowed, such as stickers, erasers or pencils for the entire class.

Birthday Invitations

Birthday invitations may be passed out in school if the entire class is invited.

Bussing

The safety of your children on school buses and at bus stops is one of our primary concerns. In the past, we have experienced situations at the end of the school day where school buses arrive at bus stops to discharge students and no parents and/or designees are present to receive their children. Our only recourse has been to return the child to school to assure their safety.

To help ensure the safety of all students and the efficient operation of our transportation program, a fee will be assessed if a student must be returned to school because no parent, guardian, or authorized adult is present at the designated bus stop. The fee schedule is as follows:

- **First occurrence:** \$25
- **Second occurrence:** \$50
- **Third occurrence:** \$75
- **Fourth occurrence:** Suspension of the student's bus privileges.

Returning students to school has not only placed additional responsibility on the office staff, but has also created a problem for our bus drivers. The return of buses to school has caused late arrivals at other stops, often causing unnecessary distress to other parents. **Please be further advised that a fourth such occurrence will result in suspension of bus privileges for one week and an additional occurrence will result in a one-month suspension.**

Although this problem rests with very few parents, this is meant to remind all parents and guardians of their responsibility for the safety of their children.

1. The safety of your child is top priority. Bus drivers will not be able to release your child to anyone unless you give them written notification that someone other than yourself will be taking your child off the bus. Anyone picking your child up from the bus stop must be 18 or older. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

In an emergency situation where you need someone other than yourself to pick up your child, please contact the main office and we will contact the bus company. Anyone who is given permission to pick up a child should always have identification on them.

2. The changing of buses throughout the year is not permissible at this level. We will not allow students to switch buses for play dates. If an emergency situation arises, please contact the main office for assistance. We respectfully request your continued support, and we thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Daily Schedule

Teacher's Daily Hours: 8:25 – 3:20
(Unless otherwise specified)

Start Time	End Time
8:40	3:10

Delayed Openings

In the event of a delayed opening, Durban Avenue School will run on the following schedule:

Start Time	End Time
10:40	3:10

Bus stop times on delayed openings will be 2 hours later than your regularly scheduled bus pick up times.

Discipline

Every student will be afforded the opportunity to learn and feel safe at Durban Avenue School. We will adhere to the following school rules that were established by a discipline committee several years ago.

We will feel good about ourselves and our school. We will be proud.

We will take pride in our appearance. We will follow the district dress code.

We will be safe at all times. We will respect the feelings of the members of our school family. We will not kick, push, spit at or touch anyone else.

We will be quiet as we travel the halls so as not to interfere with other students' learning. We will always have permission when we leave the classroom.

We will be courteous and practice good manners. "Please," "Thank You," and "I'm sorry" go a long way. We will use appropriate language at all times.

We will keep our school neat and clean. We will not damage property in the school or on the bus.

We will do our assignments to the best of our ability. We will arrive at school promptly and attend school regularly.

Consequences:

The classroom teacher will make every attempt to remedy inappropriate behaviors in the classroom. Students may be given different consequences depending upon the specific teacher's classroom consequences.

In the event that a student displays severe inappropriate behaviors, he or she will be sent to the building principal. Consequences will be as follows:

Action	1 st Offense	2 nd Offense	3 rd Offense
Hitting, pushing, or intent to harm another individual	Lunch Detention - Kindergarten/1 st Grade	After school detention Parent Conference	
Using Inappropriate Language	Warning by Building Principal	Lunch Detention - Kindergarten/1 st Grade	After school detention Parent Conference
Destroying or Defacing School or Other's Property	Lunch Detention - Kindergarten/1 st Grade	After school detention Parent Conference	
Disrespect to an Individual	Warning by Building Principal	Lunch Detention - Kindergarten/1 st Grade	After school detention Parent Conference

Excessive inappropriate behaviors can result in an in-school or out of school suspension as deemed necessary by the building principal.

Dress Code

In August of 2005, the Hopatcong Board of Education adopted a new dress code. Please visit www.hopatcongschools.org to view Policy 5511.

Early/Emergency Dismissal 1/2 Day Schedule

On occasion, Durban Avenue School will be on a shortened schedule in order to conduct parent conferences, other school related activities or emergency closing. The schedule is as follows:

Start Time	End Time
8:40	12:45

****In the event of an Emergency Early Dismissal lunch will be served at:**

10:40 for Kindergarten/Preschool/PSD/MD classes

11:10 for First Grade classes

There is no recess on an Emergency Early Dismissal.

The following dates are the current known half days for Durban Avenue School for:

Holiday Recess:

1. November 25, 2026
2. December 23, 2026

Parent Teacher Conference:

- 1 November 9, 10, 11, 2026
- 2 March 15, 16, 17, 2027

Parent Teacher Conferences
Parent Teacher Conferences

Early Pick Up

Parents are strongly encouraged to make doctor and dentist appointments after school hours. Early pick up interrupts the learning process of the student involved as well as the other students in the classroom.

Educational Equity Policies

The Hopatcong Borough School District has adopted and implemented written educational equity policies that:

1. Recognize and value the diversity of persons and groups within the society and promote the acceptance of persons of diverse backgrounds regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability or socioeconomic status; and
2. Promote equal educational opportunity and foster a learning environment that is free from all forms of prejudice, discrimination and harassment based upon race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability or socioeconomic status in the policies, programs and practices of the district board of education.

The Hopatcong Borough Public School District complies with all applicable laws, codes, regulations, and guidelines governing equity in education including, but not limited to: N.J.S.A.18A:36-20; N.J.S.A.10:5; N.J.A.C. 6A:7; Guidelines for the Desegregation of Public Schools in New Jersey (1989); Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (I.D.E.A.) of 1997.

The Hopatcong Board of Education's policies prohibiting bias, harassment, discrimination, segregation and ensuring equality in educational programs and the Hopatcong School District's Comprehensive Equity Plan, grievance procedure and annual reports are available to members of the community, the staff and students at:

Hopatcong Schools Administration Building
2 Windsor Avenue
P.O. Box 1029
Hopatcong, NJ 07843
Telephone # (973) 398-8802

The **Superintendent, Mr. Jeffrey Hallenbeck**, serves as the Hopatcong School District's **Affirmative Action Officer** and coordinator for matters dealing with **Title IX**.

The **Director of Special Services, Matthew Robinson**, serves as the Hopatcong School District's coordinator for matters concerning **504**. Mr. Robinson can be reached at:

The Child Study Team Office
2 Windsor Avenue
Hopatcong Schools Administration Building
P.O. Box 1029
Hopatcong, NJ 07843
Telephone # (973) 770-8820

The Hopatcong School District's Comprehensive Equity Plan, grievance procedure and annual reports are also available through the Office of the Superintendent.

Electronics

Non-district issued electronic equipment must be kept at home. A three-step plan will be implemented.

1st Occurrence - teacher will take and return the item at the end of the day.

2nd Occurrence - parent or legal guardian may make an appointment to pick up the item at the end of the day.

3rd Occurrence - the item will be held in the office until the last day of school.

Emergency Early Dismissal

In the event of an emergency, we may need to close school early. The early dismissal schedule is usually followed. We will notify you of the closing via our **Final Site Notification System**. Please have your phone on during inclement weather days. Also, please listen to any messages left on your voice mail before calling the school. Please note that the after school Alphabest program is cancelled whenever there is an early emergency closing. Dismissal time is dependent upon the specific emergency.

Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act - FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level.

Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students." Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies. Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct record which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to

amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record.

However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA.

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

The Board of Education prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying (Policy 5512.01). A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation or bullying, 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, intimidation or bullying. A copy of this complete policy is available on the district website and is also distributed annually in the school newsletter. If you have concerns regarding HIB (Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying), please contact Lisa Osbun, Durban Avenue's Anti-Bullying Specialist.

Illnesses

Staying Home and Returning to School

Please refer to our website for specifics.

Lost & Found

Lost and found items are housed in the nurse's office. If parents wish to check the lost and found, please remember to first sign in at the main office.

Lunch

Students may either buy or bring their lunch to school. Lunch prices for the 2026 - 2027 school year are as follows:

Daily Lunch Ticket	\$4.00
Milk	\$1.00
Snack	\$1.00/\$1.75
Breakfast	\$2.60

***Please make checks payable to the Hopatcong BOE.**

Medication at School

In order for many students with chronic health conditions and disabilities to remain in school, medication may have to be administered during school hours. However, parents/guardians are encouraged to administer medications at home whenever possible. Medications should be administered in school only when necessary for the health and safety of students. Herbal remedies and nutritional supplements are not considered medications and should not be administered in school.

The only individuals permitted by law to administer medication to pupils in schools are:

- 1 School staff holding a current medical or nursing license in the State of New Jersey (e.g., the school doctor or the school nurse).
- 2 A substitute school nurse employed by the district.
- 3 The pupil's parent or guardian.

Children are not permitted to self-administer any medication in school. (Students needing life saving medication are an exception to this rule, but must have proper documentation from their physician on file in the nurse's office.)

Parents must provide the school nurse with a **written doctor's order** for all

medications, *both prescription and over the counter medications (including vitamins)*. A New Jersey licensed physician, dentist or nurse practitioner may write the medication order. This written order must include the following information:

- 1 The pupil's medical diagnosis for which the medication is required
- 2 The name of the medication, the dosage and time of administration
- 3 Any potential side effects
- 4 An outline of any restrictions the medication might make on the student's daily activities
- 5 A clear description of the conditions under which the medication is to be used
- 6 A list of any other medication the pupil receives that might enhance, alter or impact the effects of the ordered medication
- 7 The prescribing healthcare provider's *signature and stamp*.

All medication orders must be reviewed by both the parent and healthcare provider, at the beginning of each school year or at the time the medication is needed.

Parents must also provide a written request for administration of the medication, which grants permission for such administration and relieves the Board and its employees of liability for administration of medication. Board-approved medication forms are available upon request from the school nurse and are also available on the Hopatcong District website.

All medication, prescribed and over the counter, must be brought to school by the parent or guardian in the original, labeled bottle or container and shall be picked up at the end of the period of medication or at the end of the school year. Please do not send medication in your child's backpack.

All of the above criteria must be met before medication may be administered at school. Should parents/guardians have any questions or concerns, please call the school nurse, at **973-770-8882**.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are completed for those students who are having academic difficulties mid marking period. Progress reports will be distributed on the following dates:

Progress Reports - October 9, 2026
Progress Reports - January 15, 2027
Progress Reports - April 23, 2027

Report Card

Report cards will be distributed three times throughout the year.

Report Cards

November 25, 2026

Report Cards

March 3, 2027

Report Cards

Last day of school

Student Safety

To ensure student safety, Heelys, with or without wheels inserted, are not permitted to be worn at school at any time, even at after school activities.

Tardiness

Educational research shows that attending school regularly helps to assure academic gains. In addition, coming to school on time helps to avoid unnecessary stress on your child. Students need to start the day on a positive note. With that in mind, please be punctual each day.

"Walkers/Personal Transportation" - After School Pick-Ups

If you plan to pick up your child on a regular daily basis, a note must be sent to the classroom teacher at the beginning of the year. This child will be considered a "walker" and be dismissed first. You must walk to the front doors to pick up your child.

If your child normally takes the bus but you decide to pick him or her up on a specific day, a dated note must be sent to the classroom teacher on that day. Please avoid calling the main office to notify us of this change.

*No student will be released without an escort by a Parent/Guardian who is at least 18 years old.

*If you send someone else to pick up your child, you must send in a written note indicating who will be picking up the child. This person will be required to submit ID.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to call the main office.

STAFF EMAIL LIST

NAMES

Annette, Suzanne
Bauer, Audra
Bisignani, Jennifer
Brennan, Kathleen
Cardosa, Gabrielle
Coleman, Patricia
Curatolo, Annaliese
Coviello, Lauren
Culcasi, Michelle
Debos, Edric
DeLorenzo, Maria
DeMetro, Dana
Dougherty, Christi
Fajerman, Eric
Harris, Blair
Ireland, Karylin
Mastroviti, Susan
McFadden, Katherine
Nee, Mary
Nied, Christina
Pagano, Tanya
Piereth, Melanie
Pinto, Diana
Razak, Karli
Rodick, Kelly
Ryder, Melanie
Osburn, Lisa
Strzepek, Erica
Valenti, Jennifer
Villani, Martina

E-MAIL ADDRESS

sannette@hopatcongschools.org
abauer@hopatcongschools.org
jbisignani@hopatcongschools.org
kbrennan@hopatcongschools.org
gcardosaschnabel@hopatcongschools.org
pcoleman@hopatcongschools.org
acuratolo@hopatcongschools.org
lcoviello@hopatcongschools.org
mculcasi@hopatcongschools.org
edebos@hopatcongschools.org
mdelorenzo@hopatcongschools.org
ddemetro@hopatcongschools.org
cdougherty@hopatcongschools.org
efajerman@hopatcongschools.org
bharris@hopatcongschools.org
kireland@hopatcongschools.org
smastroviti@hopatcongschools.org
kmcfadden@hopatcongschools.org
mnee@hopatcongschools.org
cnied@hopatcongschools.org
tpagano@hopatcongschools.org
mpiereth@hopatcongschools.org
dpinto@hopatcongschools.org
krazak@hopatcongschools.org
krodick@hopatcongschools.org
mryder@hopatcongschools.org
losburn@hopatcongschools.org
estrzepek@hopatcongschools.org
jvalenti@hopatcongschools.org
mvillani@hopatcongschools.org