



PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK 2011-2012

MISSION

Nantucket New School is a co-educational day school serving students in pre-school through grade eight. Within a warm and nurturing school community, our program encourages academic excellence, respects the pace of childhood, and seeks to instill in our students curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning. In creating strong partnerships between school and family, we foster kindness, self-confidence, self-knowledge, and social responsibility.

PHILOSOPHY

We believe that a small school is uniquely equipped to meet the individual needs of students and their families. A low student/teacher ratio provides opportunities for us consistently to recognize each student as a person and as a learner. Essential to our success are strong student-teacher relationships, as well as partnerships between teachers and parents, creating a family atmosphere where students of different ages are able to interact cooperatively on a regular basis. We believe in and are committed to purposeful involvement in the unique community that is Nantucket and seek to build a student body that reflects the changing diversity of the Island.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME & SCHOOL

The strong partnership between parents and teachers is a defining characteristic of the Nantucket New School. We as teachers can best serve the needs of your child when there is an atmosphere of cooperation and trust between school and home. You see your child from a unique perspective, and your input is most important to us. You may find that situations arise where your child will need you to intervene, and you will want to contact someone at school. If you need more information, or if you feel that someone at school should be aware of your child's concern, please do not hesitate to call. A telephone call can often clarify or resolve a situation and may also prevent a misunderstanding or minor issue from developing into a major problem. Teachers may be reached via e-mail (all addresses are first initial, last name @ nantucketnewschool.org) or by phone at the following extensions:

Moira Parsons	Administrative Assistant	
	Main Office	Extension 10
David Provost	Head of School	Extension 11

Lori Corry	Business Manager	508.228.1769
Gage Dobbins	Development Office	508.228.8769

(Teacher extensions will be posted on the website and distributed on the first day of school.)

PARENT CONFERENCES & WRITTEN REPORTS

Parent conferences are held twice per year (see calendar) and are extremely important forums for teacher and parents to exchange information about student progress. Students may sometimes participate in these conferences when specifically agreed upon by the teacher and parent in order to maintain effective, direct communication among teacher, parent, and student. Additional conferences may be scheduled at the request of parents or teachers at any time during the school year.

Written reports are prepared and mailed to families four times per year. Semester reports (containing grades for students in grades 5-8, where applicable) are sent in January and June. . A mid-term report is sent in November and in March.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

School is officially open to students at 7:45 a.m. Students in grades K-8 are to report to classrooms or homerooms by 8:00 a.m. Students arriving after 8:00 are considered tardy. Pre-school students should arrive just before 9:00 a.m.; before-school care is available to pre-school students beginning at 7:45 a.m.) Being on time for the beginning of the school day is extremely important. Parents give an implicit message to their children if they allow students to chronically arrive late. Students arriving late should report to the office before going to class.

Pre-school students are dismissed at 2:00. All other students are dismissed at 2:40. Students may remain at school for extra help on any day if prior arrangements are made with the teacher. An after school program will be offered at Strong Wings several days per week until 5:00. Parents will be charged a fee for this program and may sign up in the Strong Wings office.

Parents are asked to drive with extreme caution in the parking lot, to observe parking protocols, and to accompany young students into the school. The safety of all students and the smooth flow of traffic in the parking lot are our primary concerns.

Students will not be released to any previously unauthorized individual, including parents of classmates, without written permission. Please inform the office in writing of any special circumstances or instructions regarding the dismissal of your child.

ABSENCES

Any absence from school should be reported to the school office before 8:30 a.m. A call may be made to your home if your child is absent and we do not hear from you. We believe there is quite literally no substitute for a child's physical presence at school.

While teachers will do whatever they can to assist students when they are absent, parents must remain aware that teachers and students do their best work in the classroom. We respectfully ask that parents make an effort to make medical and other appointments during non-school hours. Parents may call the office to request homework assignments and other materials, or a classmate may be called to gather information.

EXTENDED / SPECIAL ABSENCES

Extended absences not related to illness or family emergency are strongly discouraged. Students who miss significant numbers of school days for family vacations and the like sometimes suffer academically and socially despite the student's and the teacher's best efforts. If you know that your child will miss two or more days of school, please notify teachers and the office in advance.

HEALTH AND MEDICATIONS

We respectfully ask that students who are sick remain at home. The office will call home and ask that any student with clear symptoms be picked up from School. Students should be kept at home for a minimum of 24 hours following fever, vomiting, or other like symptoms.

Medication of any type may not be dispensed to students without the written permission of a parent or legal guardian. Under no circumstances should students be allowed to keep medications in their possession during the school day.

Please note that NNS does not conduct or require the health examinations that the state of MA requires for all public school students. We recommend that you consult with your health care provider, your local school committee or your local board of health for information about these examinations and to ensure these exams are carried out for your children.

FAMILY TRIPS

The school calendar provides a generous vacation schedule with considerations for off-island travel. Therefore, we strongly discourage family trips that result in students missing school. Such absences undermine the ethos of commitment and put students at an academic disadvantage.

PARENTS & HOMEWORK

Students may be assigned homework depending on their grade level. Homework is intended to reinforce material covered in class and is in no way intended as a punishment or deterrent to family or recreational time. The amount of homework will vary with the age of the child; teachers make a serious effort to communicate with one another and with parents so as not to make unfair demands on students' time outside of school.

One of the most positive ways you can assist your child is to help her or him establish a place and a routine for study. It is crucial for your student to have a predictable routine for completing work at home, one that fits the cycles of your family life. The actual study place and position in the home are very important. In general, your child's homework environment should be quiet, well lit, comfortable, and reasonably free of distraction. The best study places are generally "low stimulus" areas where the telephone, television, and other people are unlikely to interrupt concentration. Establishing such a place and a routine early in the year will make the homework experience less taxing on both students and parents.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & INFORMATION

Daily announcements are made during Morning Meeting and will be posted on the white board outside the School. In addition, the weekly letter from the Head of School and the Upper & Lower School newsletters, as well as communication from teachers, will contain announcements and other pertinent information. In most instances, all communication will be posted on the School's website (<http://www.nantucketnewschool.org>) Parents may log in to the Parent section of the website by using the user name and password supplied at the beginning of each school year.

SCHOOL CLOSING AND PHONE LISTS

In the event of a snow day or other school cancellation, an announcement will be posted on the School's website and outgoing voice message with notification of the cancellation. School closings will also be announced on Plum TV (channel 22) and on WNAN radio (91.1 FM). Each family will receive a telephone directory during the first month of school; *this information is provided for school use only and may not be used for any solicitation, business marketing, or other function.*

P.O.N.N.S.

P.O.N.N.S. (Parents of Nantucket New School) is the school's parent organization. Its mission is threefold: coordinate volunteer efforts (especially as they relate to teacher and classroom support); organize opportunities for parent education; and sponsor a number of social events for parents throughout the year. All parents are invited and encouraged to participate. Meetings are generally held on a designated Tuesday morning each month; these dates are posted on the calendar.

BIG FRIEND, LITTLE FRIEND & FAMILIES

Nantucket New School is committed to nurturing the relationships of students across all grades. Although the bonds that are formed between the older and younger students happen each day in an informal way, two programs further enrich these relationships. Each upper school class has a lower school class to which it acts as a Big Friend. Celebrating holidays, special events, and quiet moments of reading or playing games together, these cross-grade friendships endure through the years and strengthen the fabric of respect and kindness that allow students of all ages to interact with each other

in an enjoyable, mutually beneficial way. In addition, the school is divided into six different “families.” Families work together throughout the year to accomplish set goals, to perform community service, and to participate with other families in events such as Fall Field Day, the Winter Olympics and School Spirit Day.

FIELD TRIPS

A variety of field trips are organized during the year for a variety of purposes. Many of these trips are excursions to locations on island, while others require travel off-island. Parents sign a blanket permission form for field trips at the beginning of the school year and are notified well in advance of upcoming trips. Parents are often asked to drive students to field trips and/or to serve as chaperones.

COMPUTERS

The computer lab, laptop lab, and classrooms provide students and teachers with a network of computers, which have access to the Internet and a range of software. Computers may be used only under supervision for work related to school study. The computers are shared by all students in the school, and it is most important for the equipment and lab area to be kept neat and organized. Any problems or malfunctions with computers or computer equipment should be reported immediately to a teacher. Tampering with or unauthorized use of computers or computer equipment will be treated as a serious disciplinary offense. An Acceptable Use Policy for computers is distributed at the beginning of each school year and must be returned with the signature of both parent and child before a child is allowed to access the Internet. A copy of that policy is located at the end of this handbook for your reference.

LIBRARY

The library is available to serve the needs and interests of students, faculty, staff, and families. Students learn to use various library resources within the context of their classes, and teachers are available to assist with research, reference material, and general questions about the library.

Please follow the proper procedures for borrowing library materials. Families will be held responsible for the cost of lost or unreturned books and materials.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Striving to establish student government as true service learning, the elected officers of the school reflect not a popularity hierarchy, but rather a commitment to service. The elected officers chair the three branches of the council: School Spirit, On-Island Activism, and Global Outreach. Each of these branches undertakes various projects throughout the year that may be as varied as lending a hand at the local food bank, visiting the elderly each Saturday morning, promoting school events, or adopting students in need in another location. In addition, the student council sets the stage for performing year-long random acts of kindness, a celebrated tradition which takes all students at the

Nantucket New School out into the community to spontaneously acknowledge and celebrate those people and organizations who are making a difference in our lives.

MORNING MEETING

Morning meeting takes place every day at 9:45 a.m. and is attended by all members of the school community. This daily gathering is a time of announcements, celebrations, and presentations by students and teachers. Morning meeting is led each week by a different student or group of students, and a speaker or guest from the community is featured most Wednesdays. Parents are cordially invited to attend Morning Meeting at any time.

FOOD POLICY

In the interest of health and safety, we respectfully ask for parent cooperation in observing some general guidelines for food at school. We ask that students not bring candy, sugary snacks, or caffeinated beverages as part of their snack or lunch. Because of food allergies and other dietary concerns among some of our students and in the interest of health and safety, we discourage the sharing of food at snack and lunchtime. Classrooms with students with severe food allergies may have additional restrictions. Lastly, because we feel it is important for parents to monitor their child's eating habits, we ask students to take uneaten food home as opposed to throwing it away. Parents are asked to respect the practices and policies of fellow parents and to refrain from distributing candy unless parent consent is given or implied. Parents are respectfully asked to use reusable containers whenever possible to reduce waste. Once again, these policies are intended not to limit dietary choices, but rather to ensure the health and safety of all students.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES & CELL PHONES

Out of consideration for others and to encourage the learning process and social interaction among members of the community, electronic devices such as mp3 players, video games, and the like are not allowed at school. Cell phones are strongly discouraged but may be carried to school for use after school hours. Students are prohibited from using cell phones during the school day; school phones are available for student use and may be used with permission.

DRESS

The Nantucket New School does not have a formalized dress code. We ask only that clothing is neat, clean, and in good taste. Specific dress may be requested for certain events during the year. Appropriate footwear is required for physical education classes. As students will be outside in all cases except for in the case of the most inclement weather, warm winter clothing (including hats and gloves) is essential. Parents may be called if students are not dressed appropriately.

LOST & FOUND

A table for lost & found articles is located in the rear foyer. Parents are asked to check regularly for items belonging to your child. Items that remain unclaimed over a period of time will be removed and donated locally.

BIRTHDAYS & PARTIES

A birthday is an important milestone in the life of a child. Each student is recognized on his or her birthday during morning meeting, and small celebrations may be arranged in conjunction with your child's classroom or homeroom teacher. If a student is planning a birthday party or another type of gathering outside of regular school hours, we encourage you to be sensitive to the feelings of classmates. Parties that include all the boys, all the girls, or the entire class are preferable to parties in which one or two children have been excluded. As a general rule of thumb, we respectfully but earnestly request that students invite either less than half or the entire group to parties. We also ask that invitations, cards, and the like not be distributed in school unless they are distributed to the entire class.

EXPECTATIONS FOR BEHAVIOR

If the school community is to function at its potential best in all areas of school and community life, it is essential that students conduct themselves in ways that are in keeping with the school's standards of good behavior. All members of the Nantucket New School community have the right to be treated with kindness and respect. Furthermore, each member of the community should be afforded an environment in which he or she can feel safe, both physically and emotionally.

Students are expected to demonstrate honesty and kindness, and that each member of our community will be helpful and supportive and show respect for others at all times.

The Statement of Commitment at the end of this handbook outlines, in very simple and direct terms, the commitment that all students make as a condition of their attendance at the Nantucket New School. We ask that students and parents read the statement carefully and return signed copies to the office.

Policy for Appropriate Use of Computers
Nantucket New School
Upper School

I understand that as a member of a computerized community my conduct must conform to the same ideals of honesty, impartiality, and concern for human welfare that have traditionally governed relations both within the school community and with the larger world generally. In particular, I agree to...

1. Avoid doing any harm to others.
2. Respect the privacy of others.
3. Honor confidentiality.
4. Be fair and take actions to minimize inequities.
5. Honor property rights and give proper credit for intellectual property.
6. Do nothing to endanger community relations or human well being generally.
7. Improve community understanding of computing resources.
8. Represent the school honorably in all instances involving use of computer resources.
9. Do nothing to impair the school's computer network or to bypass network restrictions or security and agree, furthermore, to accept the positive obligation to alert the leaders of the school to the presence of any violation of the provisions of the Code or to the existence of any threats to the dignity of the community's members or to the integrity of the community's resources.
10. Respect all community computer resources as the private property of the school and to utilize these resources for educational purposes and for such personal uses as the school explicitly sanctions.
11. Know and comply with all rules regarding acceptable computer usage as enumerated in any rules of computer usage as issued by the school.

(Student)

I/we have read this pledge and agree that my child will be bound by all commands enumerated in Policy of Appropriate Use of Computers. I/we authorize my child to use the computer resources of the school computer network and its connections to the Internet. I/we understand that access to the Internet will necessarily involve access to information, which is not under the control of the school and for which the school assumes no responsibility. I/we agree that my son will comply with all network rules and that the school may suspend or revoke network/Internet access as the school deems appropriate. Violation of any of the commands herein enumerated

will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from school in certain instances, at the discretion of the school authorities.

(Parent/Guardian)

**NANTUCKET NEW SCHOOL
STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

In an effort to create a safe, just, and caring school environment for all members of our community, we support the following Statement of Commitment.

It is my right to be physically and emotionally safe within the Nantucket New School community.

It is my responsibility to help create a positive environment by treating all people as I wish to be treated. I will do my best always to respect the differences in others and to listen respectfully to their thoughts and feelings.

When I choose to communicate about my own thoughts and feelings, I will try my best to do so respectfully.

Student signature _____

Parent signatures _____

Nantucket New School does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, class, or family structure in the administration of its educational, admissions, scholarship, and other programs.

