



Family Handbook 2022-2023

"The ultimate aim of production is not the production of goods but the production of free human beings associated with one another on terms of equality." ~John Dewey

School Contact Information

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Mission Statement

High Meadow School aims to nurture each child's love of learning by engaging their intrinsic curiosity in nature, one another, play, and creative expression. To empower each child to be an independent thinker who has a personal voice by providing opportunities to authentically and compassionately participate as a member of a diverse, democratic community.

Pedagogy & Community Values

- When children are allowed to explore nature, the outdoors and their relationships within their local community their intrinsic drive to learn flourishes.
- Education should prepare students to participate actively in a free, diverse and democratic society.
- Social and emotional development occurs when children feel like they are well known by the adults around them and they are in an environment where they can explore and embrace their and others' unique identities, build a sense of belonging through engagement with others, and participate in boundary setting, problem solving, and collective decision making.
- Play is an essential part of learning for all ages.
- Education should have the learner at the center of the classroom experience.
- Each child has an innate desire and ability to learn and question the world around them. Schools should honor the natural process of learning and allow students to inquire, experiment, research, and reflect in order to acquire knowledge.

- Every child's unique engagement with inquiry and topics that fascinate them should be honored through providing children with choice in their learning.

Social/Emotional Learning, Discipline & Democratic Education

The goal for any High Meadow student is to continually grow in an environment that honors their unique voice while also remaining accountable to others in the community. We nourish, demonstrate, and require mutual trust and respect among all members of the community. We guide the students in learning how to balance their needs as an individual with the needs of the group. We believe that school rules and self-discipline are best internalized when children are involved in their creation, implementation and determination of disciplinary outcomes. When students are involved in their own discipline they are more able to learn how to self-regulate and become moral, self-determined citizens. That is the hallmark of our belief in Democratic Education.

The school community begins their day with a morning meeting (Nursery-4th grade) or advisory (5th-8th grade) period during which they work together inclusively to cultivate a sense of belonging and bond with their peers and teachers. This timeframe is also used as a block for social-emotional learning. In morning meeting or advisory, students also have time to solve any social/emotional issues or behavior incidents they may be facing as a group. This allows them to fully focus on the academic programs that follow the meeting and gives a consistent touch point for staff. Once a week there is an Upper School meeting to provide a space for our 5th-8th grade community to determine and make rules, develop culture, and address any larger conflicts or issues collectively. Once a week there is also a Po Po Council where members of the 1st-4th Grade community meet to do the very same thing. We believe by modeling structures of day-to-day democracy students are better able to enter the world in which they actually live.

Please refer to the numbered list below in order to get more specific information on our policies and pedagogy.

- 1. Developmentally Appropriate Response to Behavior:** When a behavior incident happens at our school, we believe that each situation needs to be treated based on the individual child or children and the circumstances that occurred.

When a behavior occurs that negatively impacts the community, teachers and staff take time to assess the situation that occurred through the gathering of information. They consider questions such as the following to determine the next steps forward:

- What is the age of the child and what are the developmental issues at work here?
- Is it clear to the child what is expected?
- What rule is being broken?
- What problem is the behavior creating?
- What will help to solve the problem?
- What is the frequency and severity of the behavior occurring for this child?

Through this fact finding, teachers and staff will be able to determine the best path forward for addressing the behavior and repairing the harm.

- 2. Restorative Practices and Restorative Justice:** When people act out or make mistakes they inflict harm amongst their fellow community members. Traditional modes of discipline typically only address the offending party in a private setting away from the eyes and ears of those they have harmed. We believe this type of discipline provides the short term result of stopping the behaviors but lacks long term change and community building. Restorative justice helps an offending student to own what they did, make it right for those hurt or affected, and involves the community in helping both the victim *and* the offender. Restorative justice acknowledges that those who do wrong need healing as well. It empowers students to resolve conflicts on their own and in small groups. During morning meetings and circles teachers will use these practices to better our school community.
- 3. Mediation:** This is a specific restorative justice practice where the offending party sits down with the victim(s) to address the harm that was caused. During mediation, students are asked to come up with solutions in order to ensure that the toxic behavior ends and the community can move forward in a more positive direction. Mediations are facilitated by trained staff members and may include trained Upper School students.
- 4. Logical Consequences instead of Punishment:** Within the mediation process, High Meadow students work with trained staff members or other students to come up with logical consequences to address behavior that negatively impacts their community. Logical consequences aim to directly address the harm of the behavior, helps students analyze their behaviors, and helps students consider the results of their choices while preserving their dignity as children. According to the Responsive Classroom Approach “Unlike punishment, where the intention is to make the child feel shamed, the intention of logical consequences is to help children develop internal controls and learn from mistakes in a supportive atmosphere.”

Logical consequences aim to repair the harm that was caused while punishment is often not directly related to the behavior. For example, if two children have a water fight at the water fountain and get water all over the floor, they might come up with solutions like cleaning up the water with paper towels or mopping up the spill instead of being suspended from school.

5. Bullying:

- a. New York State's Dignity for All Students Act defines bullying as "unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance." The intention of bullying is to harm, intimidate, or coerce. The behavior is repeated, targeted, and continues over time. Different types of bullying include: ignoring or excluding someone, physical abuse with the intent to harm, verbal abuse with the intent to harm, disrespect of someone's property, encouraging others to gang up on someone, circulating malicious rumors, active intolerance of differences, incitement or getting someone else to do any of the prior listed actions, and any other behavior where the goal is to intimidate or cause discomfort.
- b. In cases of bullying, the school administration deals directly with the conflict and will not immediately follow the process of Restorative Justice/Mediation. We believe a professional needs to assess the situation to ensure the safety of all students. Bullying is against the ideals of social inclusivity and mutual respect that are the underlying principles of the basic social contract at HMS and will not be tolerated. If bullying does arise, the school administration will immediately step in with the goal of stopping the behavior and also diffusing the causes or underlying social dynamics leading to it.
- c. Mediation and Restorative Justice circles will only be used if the victim, victim's family, and community feel safe addressing the bully.

6. Expulsion and Suspension Policy:

- a. High Meadow School Administration reserves the right to expel or suspend a student on any grounds, including but not limited to:
 - i. Behavior that is consistently destructive to self, other students, staff, or the facility
 - ii. Enactments or threats of serious violence
 - iii. Behavior that is consistently deleterious to the learning environment
 - iv. Unlawful behavior on or off school grounds, during or outside the school day
 - v. An inability to build a partnership with parent(s) to support a child's learning or behavior

- vi. Student's parent(s) engage in behavior or communications that are disrespectful, harassing, or threatening towards students, staff, or other parents in the community
 - vii. Lack of payment
7. **Technology Policy:** At HMS, we understand and acknowledge that students are digital natives. Our ever changing world demands technological ingenuity, and we understand the use of technology will only increase. We believe students should learn how to best use technology in the most organic way possible and be involved in determining expectations at the beginning of the school year as a democratic community. That being said, the school administration agrees that technology can also become a hindrance to all community members. Use of technology during structured events by students, staff and community members is currently prohibited unless for pre-approved marketing purposes.

School Schedule, Arrival/Dismissal, and Attendance Policies

1. Length of School Day by Group

- a. *Nursery 3s (N3s) and Pre-K:* 9:15AM - 2:45 PM
- b. *Kindergarten (K)-4th Grade:* 8:45 AM – 3:00 PM
- c. *5th - 8th Grade:* 8:45 AM - 3:10 PM

2. Arrival Times:

To accommodate our parking lot and drop-off procedures, HMS has staggered arrival times. Below are the arrival windows for each grade:

- a. *Nursery 3s (N3s) and Pre-K:* 9:00 - 9:15AM
- b. *Kindergarten (K)-8th Grade:* 8:35 AM - 8:45 AM

3. Arrival Procedures:

- a. K-8th grade drop-off begins at 8:35am.
 - i. We ask families of students 1-8 to stay in your cars and drop off in the drop-off line. Staff will guide you through the drop-off procedures.
 - ii. Families of students in K can park in the lot in front of the main building (brick farmhouse) and walk their children to the treehouse area in front of the main building to meet their teachers.
- b. Nursery 3 and Pre-K drop-off begins at 9:00am and the day officially starts at 9:15 AM. Families of Nursery and Pre-K students will be able to park in the lot in front of the main building (brick farmhouse) and walk their child to their classroom beginning at 9AM.

- 4. Lateness Policy: It is critical that your child comes to school with time to walk to their class and unpack each morning.** This is not only supportive to your child's classroom community, but also to help your own child transition well into their day. Advisory (5th-8th grade) and Morning Meeting (K-4th grade) periods for students in grades K-8 begin at 8:45 AM. We have many learning experiences to fit into our day, and every minute counts! These early morning blocks are critical times for the teaching of social and emotional development. HMS provides an experiential and group learning process which makes the contributions of each class member an important part of the learning of the whole group. The teachers have established rituals and routines that engage and motivate the children for the day's learning and it is important for every child to be here on time. If your child's tardiness is chronic and directly impacts their ability to transition into the school day, it will warrant a meeting with the school to problem solve and discuss solutions for being on time.
- 5. Pick-Up Times:**
 - a. N3 and Pre-K pick-up begins at 2:45pm.
 - b. K-4th grade pick-up begins at 3:00pm.
 - c. 5th - 8th grade pick-up begins at 3:10pm.
- 6. Pick-Up Procedures:**
 - a. N3 and Pre-K students will be picked up from their classroom or other designated area on campus by their parents.
 - b. K-4th grade students will be walked out to the fence along the school parking lot and picked up from their designated pick up areas by their parents.
 - c. 5th - 8th grade students will be picked up in a car pick-up line from the gate in front of the PAC/Upper School Building.
- 7. District Bus Transportation:** Many of our children travel to school by bus. Each district is required to transport children to nonpublic schools if the family lives within fifteen miles of the school or is on a route provided by the district. If taking the bus, each district will contact you with information about your pick up time and driver. District buses are required to meet all NY State COVID-19 Guidelines.

District bussing occurs only on the days when district schools are in session. If your child takes the bus, please be aware of your home district's calendar and keep track of any weather-based closures so you can make alternative arrangements for transport when High Meadow is in session and your home district is not.

8. Attendance:

- a. Please do not send your child to school if they are exhibiting symptoms of illness.
- b. If your child has displayed any symptoms related to the COVID-19 virus, please do not bring your child to campus and contact our health department immediately for further instructions by calling our main office or emailing nurse@highmeadowsschool.org.
- c. **Absence Communication:** If your child is going to be unexpectedly absent, please call the main office at (845) 687-4855 as soon as possible to let us know your child will not be in attendance at school. In the event of a planned absence, please email 1. your child's homeroom teacher or advisor and 2. the main office at contact@highmeadowsschool.org to let them know of the dates of planned absence.
- d. **Late Arrival:** If your child will be unexpectedly dropped off late, please call the main office at (845) 687-4855 as soon as possible to let us know your expected time of arrival. In the event of a planned late arrival, please email 1. your child's homeroom teacher or advisor and 2. the main office at contact@highmeadowsschool.org to let them know of the dates of planned late arrival and the estimated time of arrival at school. Upon arriving at school, please bring your child to the main office for check-in and we will ensure that your child gets to class.
- e. **Early Dismissal:** If your child will be unexpectedly picked up early, please call the main office at (845) 687-4855 as soon as possible to let us know your expected time of pick up. In the event of a planned early dismissal, please email 1. your child's homeroom teacher or advisor and 2. the main office at contact@highmeadowsschool.org to let them know of the dates of planned early dismissal and the estimated time of pick up. Upon arriving at school, please proceed to the main office to pick up your child.
- f. **Extended Absence Due to Travel:** While we encourage consistency at school as much as possible throughout the academic year, the school understands that families may need to travel at times that do not coincide with school breaks. In the event of extended travel, please email 1. your child's homeroom teacher or advisor and 2. the main office at

contact@highmeadowsschool.org to let them know of the dates of travel. For extended absences in which you'd like your child to engage in school work, please give your child's homeroom teacher or advisor at least two weeks' notice so that teachers have time to prepare work. When traveling, families must adhere to the most current COVID-19 travel guidance issued by the CDC and adapted by our state and county.

- g.** If a child's unexplained absence or tardiness are so frequent that they impact the academic and/or social development of the child, the school will request a meeting with the family to discuss remedies.
- 4. Emergency School Closures and Delays:** In the event that the school needs to delay opening or close due to a weather-related emergency or other unsafe condition on campus, the school will alert families via email notification and push text notification. If the closure happens when children are already at school, we ask that families come immediately to pick up their children upon receiving the notification.

While High Meadow resides in the Rondout School District, our schools may be affected differently by emergencies or inclement weather and cause us to make different decisions based on factors such as power or the safety of campus. Please make sure to hear from us in the event of a suspected closure.

For students who take the district buses to school, please keep in mind that bussing may be affected in the case of a weather emergency even if our school remains open. Please make sure to check your local district's closure status to determine whether bussing will be provided in the event of inclement weather.

Emergency Text Alert System: All families will be automatically registered to receive emergency text alerts from the school, including delays, early closings, and closings.

School Health Policies

- 1. Health Staff:** High Meadow school has a full-time nurse on campus 5 days per week. We have one nurse provided to us by the Rondout School District as well as a part-time nurse on our staff.

- 2. Health Examinations for Students Entering School:** New York State Education Law 902 requires a health examination for all students entering the school for the first time and when entering Nursery, Pre-K, K, 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th grades. These health exams are generally due by the end of September and are required to be submitted on the New York State School Health Examination Form. Health Examinations forms are due on September 30th, 2022. Failure to provide these records will exclude your child from being able to attend school.
- 3. Immunizations:** Per New York State Public Health Law 2164, all students must be compliant with immunizations requirements. Students aged 11 years and entering the 6th grade for the 2022-2023 school year are required to have received the Tdap booster immunization. Students aged 10 years and older, entering the 7th grade for the 2022-2023 school year are required to have received the meningococcal (MenACWY) immunization. Immunization records must be submitted to the school health office by September 30th, 2022. Failure to provide these records will exclude your child from being able to attend school. Vaccine information by age/grade are available here: <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2370.pdf>
- 4. Medication Dispensing at School:** All medications must be in the original container and include a dated note from your practitioner outlining the purpose, amount, frequency, and duration. This includes over-the-counter, homeopathic, and prescription medications. All medications will be collected on the first day of school by our school health staff. To discuss details about medication, please contact the School Health Office at (845) 687-4855 or nurse@highmeadowsschool.org.
- 5. First Aid Incident Report:** Any accident involving a student will be documented. Children who are injured are taken to the school nurse for first aid treatment. Anytime a child hits their head, they must visit the nurse to be checked. When a child visits the nurse, the nurse will contact the child's guardian. In the event that the guardian cannot be reached, the nurse will leave a message or send a written report home with the student.
- 6. Sunscreen/Bug Spray Policy:** We allow students to bring non-aerosolized bug spray and sunscreen for personal use on campus throughout the day. If your child will need assistance applying these products, we need written parental consent. Please send this consent to your child's classroom teachers.
- 7. SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Policies:** We will release a companion document that details out our COVID-19 policies for the start of the school year. COVID-19 guidance

is subject to change throughout the year based on our area's COVID-19 risk levels and any new school guidance released from the CDC and adapted by New York State and the Ulster County Health Department.

8. Accommodations for Children with Severe Allergies and Medical Alerts:

- a. High Meadow holds the right to restrict allergens that come into our school facility based on the needs of our students.
- b. Our staff is briefed on students they work with who have severe allergies or medical alerts at the start of the school year.
- c. Applicable staff who work closely with children who have severe allergies are trained in Epi-Pen administration in the event of an emergency.
- d. All of our classrooms are equipped with student rosters and go-bags that share severe allergies and medical alerts for students in the class in the event of an emergency.
- e. In the event that we purchase and distribute foods, High Meadow will provide food that does not knowingly include allergens for students across the school.

School Safety Policies:

1. **Emergency Procedures:** Emergency and evacuation procedures are a very serious part of the school routine. Whether it is a drill or real emergency, the actions that students and staff should take are the same. Emergency drills are held throughout the year. The drills are planned in such a way as to ensure the safety of students and staff in the shortest possible time and in the most efficient and orderly fashion. The Head of School shall see that the school complies with all legal requirements related to emergency and evacuation procedures. In emergencies, High Meadow staff will notify the people indicated on the child's Emergency Contact list. Our absolute priority will be to first attend to the emergency and ensure the safety and health of the child or children involved in the accident, then secure the surrounding area to address the unsafe conditions, and then contact guardians or emergency contacts.
2. **Mandated Reporting of Abuse and Neglect:** High Meadow School staff members are known as Mandated Reporters in compliance with state law. If a member of the staff suspects that a child is being abused or neglected, they are obligated to report

their suspicion to Ulster County Child Protective Services (CPS)). Signs of abuse or neglect may include but are not limited to:

- a. Patterns of lateness to school and absence from school;
- b. Late pick-up from school or the school bus;
- c. Consistently unkempt or dirty;
- d. Signs of physical abuse or neglect.

Should a Mandated Reporter at High Meadow School be required to make a report to CPS, High Meadow's Student Supports Coordinator will be available to provide supportive services to the family and student throughout the process, and they will act as the ongoing liaisons between the family, CPS, and the school.

- 3. Search and Seizure:** To ensure the safety of students and staff, HMS maintains the right to search students and their property if there is reason to believe a school rule or state law has been violated. To that end, school administration may search the student storage area (cubbies), student coats, person, backpack, or other personal belongings.

School Calendar

1. The 2022-2023 School Calendar can be found [here](#).

Campus Events

Periodically throughout the school year, families will be invited onto campus for meetings and special events. For these events, we ask that families adhere to school rules and COVID-19 protocols.

- 1. Visiting Campus:** If you are visiting campus outside of a school event for a meeting with teachers or staff, a volunteer opportunity, etc., please sign in at the main office and receive a guest pass. During a classroom or schoolwide event, families will be checked in at the gate to the parking lot.
 - a. Parking:** When visiting campus, please park in the school's parking lot only. Please observe the 5 mile per hour speed limit and refrain from using a cell phone. You may enter by the school sign off Main St. Please only make a right turn onto 209 from 8 AM - 4 PM.
 - b. Pets:** Pets are not allowed on campus.
- 2. Yearly Events:**

- a. **Family Welcome Picnic:** This event occurs a week before the start of school and is a moment for both new and returning families, students, and staff to come together and launch the new school year. Families and students will get a chance to visit classrooms, tour the campus, and eat together.
- b. **Hi-Five Fall Fun Day:** This is a special tradition to welcome our new fifth grade students to the upper school division. 6th-8th grades plan a day to surprise the fifth grade with a celebration of their arrival and field games.
- c. **Community Curriculum Night:** On this night in late September, parents visit the campus and get a chance to meet with teachers and hear about our learning approach and what their child will experience this school year.
- d. **Winter Solstice:** On this day, we celebrate the shortest day of the year and the winter season. Students participate in a variety of activities across the school and gather around the fire to make wishes for the world in the upcoming year.
- e. **Groundhog Festival:** Winter in the Hudson Valley has its perks but sometimes it can feel like such a drag once February hits. Did you know that the first local hibernating animal to wake up for spring is the Groundhog? They tend to start their preparations for warmer weather in February. As a school we'll gather to celebrate this furried friend, as we have many local inhabitants, and have a festival outside to provide laughter and fun.
- f. **Earth Day:** As a school that focuses on sustainability education and is grounded in Place-Based education methodologies, every year our school celebrates Earth Day in a unique fashion. Each division does an activity during the day - whether that is service or education related - and then the whole school gathers at the end of the day for a celebration.
- g. **Meadow MoCA:** A week of whole-school collaborative celebration of the arts that culminates in an annual benefits auction that funds numerous items at school - financial aid, facility improvements, etc. This includes art, music recital, and dance recital performances.
- h. **Maple Games:** This is High Meadow's very own version of field day. Students are placed in an age-mixed team to help build a broader community. The teams rotate to different activities - such as a Pancakes with homemade maple syrup, Dance Off, Water Balloon toss, etc. - in order to just have plain

old fun. The goal of the Maple Games is to celebrate what the year had to offer and is considered our send off into summer.

- i. HMS Variety Show and Other Arts-Based Performances:** High Meadow will host a variety of performances throughout the school year based on what children would like to share with the greater community. The HMS Variety Show in June will culminate the year and will be a time to celebrate all of the wonderful talents our students bring to the school.
- 3. Family Conferences and Progress Reporting:** Family conferences occur at three points throughout the school year so that teachers and families can remain in partnership and close contact about each student's progress:
 - a. Listening Conferences (just before the start of school):** At listening conferences, teachers meet with the parents/guardians of each child in their class. The family has a chance to tell the teacher all about their child from their perspective as primary caregiver and first teachers.
 - b. December and March Progress Reports and Conferences:** High Meadow will update families in writing about their child's progress. These reports will include both academic and social-emotional information. Progress reports will be used to frame the content of conferences and will be used to problem-solve and set goals between teachers and families.
 - c. End of Year Reports:** All students will receive an end of year progress report to summarize their progress over the course of the school year.

Parent-School Communication

- 1. Expectations for Communication:** We value the following expectations for communication at High Meadow:
 - a. Assume positive intentions.
 - b. Communicate with positivity and respect for each other in person, in email, and in text/phone communications.
 - c. Be community-oriented and take on other's perspectives to empathize while communicating.
 - d. Directly communicate with teachers and staff to avoid spread of false information.
 - e. Honor children's dignity and caring for them in all communication.

- 2. Contacting Teachers:** Your child's teachers are the first people to communicate with at the school. All teachers have professional email accounts and phone extensions in their classrooms. It is expected that all communication with teachers remains professional and within the confines of a regular workday (8:30am-5:00pm). Do not for any reason ask a teacher or staff member for their personal cell phone number. If you are contacting a teacher outside of professional work hours via email, please be aware that this is their private time and you can expect a response the next business day. All communications with teachers are expected to be respectful and non-judgmental. Failure to abide by these community guidelines may lead to disciplinary action by the school administration, up to and including dismissal from the school community. Should you have concerns about your classroom teacher's performance, please reach out to the school administration directly to set up a meeting.
- 3. Email Communications:** If the email you are writing is longer than a few sentences, please instead use email to schedule time for a phone call or meeting with your classroom teachers or other staff at High Meadow. This will better build relationships and save time.
- 4. Monday Mailer:** This is a summary of important events for the upcoming week and will be shared by email every Sunday evening beginning the second week of school. Please read your updates consistently!
- 5. Family Updates:** Monthly, families receive an electronic message from the HMS administration or faculty highlighting a theme, program, initiative, or other areas of community interest.
- 6. Community News:** Monthly, families receive an electronic newsletter including multimedia features and updates about our dynamic community and campus life.
- 7. Classroom News:** Teachers will email weekly classroom news to share information relevant to your child's specific classroom. This will include units of study and upcoming events.

Service and Community at High Meadow School

Service is an essential value embedded in the philosophy democratic education. Through service, we practice being in community with each other and actively participate in supporting and showing gratitude towards the community.

Every family is responsible for 25 hours of volunteer service each school year. Families can choose to participate in a variety of in-person or remote volunteer opportunities throughout the year, including event planning, community clean-up, participation in school committees or PTO meetings, donating food or supplies to events, etc.

Volunteer opportunities will be highlighted in weekly communications to families and will be coordinated and accounted for by Jen Bousliman, High Meadow's Director of Admissions and Retention.

Homework

As a school founded on the ideals of progressive education we think about "homework" from a critical lens. If the goal of schooling is to increase a child's intrinsic drive to learn, what does giving homework accomplish? According to extensive scientific research into the effects of giving homework, it decreases motivation to learn and causes dissatisfaction with schooling over time. However, we do believe that homework can be expertly assigned to provide organic learning opportunities during moments of inquiry for students. Homework is also often a way that teachers assess whether students are able to recall learning presented during the school day. Because of this, if students are ever assigned homework - which may be rare - they should be able to complete their work without much support from their parents and want to complete their work.

Please do not do work for your child. This takes away a chance to become comfortable with failure, an essential component to the learning process. Our school will continue to review modern research on homework and its effect on human motivation. We will also continue to view homework in the lens of progressive rather than traditional education. Our goal is to create students who are open to learning rather than getting something done so they can move onto what they're really interested in.

Communication and Inclusiveness

One of the main reasons that people cite for sending their children to High Meadow is the sense of caring they feel when they walk through the classrooms for the very first time. The teachers work hard to create a sense of collaboration and caring in their classes. When parents model inclusiveness, openness, and empathetic communication, caring for others in school will be reinforced.

Many children have a special friend or two with whom they consistently want to play. Encourage your child to play with all the students in their cohort, especially when they are young. Please encourage your child to play with children of all genders. You are modeling

inclusiveness by doing so and you are ensuring that your child has a wide net of friends to choose from. Remind your child that at school, they are expected to be inclusive and community oriented. Encourage them to be discreet about playdates at school so that other students do not feel left out.

We also encourage you to try to be open to all the parents in your children's classes. They are your collaborators for school events and fundraisers, caretakers of your children at playdates, and community members. Specific notes on communication and inclusiveness are below:

1. **Email and communicating with the school:** Never send an email that has negative emotional content to another HMS community or staff member for any reason. This includes all forms of communication including phone calls. Ask for help in working through the conflict if it can not be done face-to-face. *Repeated violations of this rule by an adult community member could lead to HMS asking the family to leave the school.*
2. **Birthday Celebrations:** HMS honors each child's special day in different ways. In the Lower School and Early Childhood divisions the class participates in a heart-warming ritual. During the ritual classmates and teachers are asked to sit quietly in a circle formation. While the birthday child sits with their back turned, we all give the child positive appreciation and affirmations. In the Upper School, children are recognized and celebrated during advisory periods. This year, we will change the practice of bringing birthday snacks into the early childhood and lower school classrooms. Instead of bringing in a snack on your child's birthday, we will be having larger seasonal birthday celebrations in each class where children can have fun together and bring in special treats.
3. **Lunch and Snacks for Students:** For the 2022/ 2023 school year lunch and shared snacks will not be provided by the school. Please pack plenty of healthy food for your student(s). Food sharing is not allowed. If your child or a child in your student's class has a severe food allergy, the school holds the right to restrict what type of food is permissible to bring into your child's classroom. Families will be notified if this is the case prior to the first day of school.
4. **Dress Code:** Clothing should be comfortable, easy to move and play in, and account for the weather. Learning and play is messy, and clothing worn to school should be able to get dirty. We require that children wear supportive shoes that have soles

that can grip a variety of outdoor terrain. Children will go outside unless the weather imposes a substantial health risk (extreme heat or cold, thunderstorm, heavy rain, blizzard, etc.) . Students may not wear clothes that contain images or references to drugs or alcohol or display disparaging, expletive, or sexual language/logos.

5. **PE Shoes:** To ensure the safest environment for your child in Physical Education we ask all of our students to come to class prepared to participate with appropriate athletic footwear. Wearing the wrong shoes can impact a student's safety and success during activities making even simple movements like running, jumping, and stopping difficult. Students who arrive in PE without proper footwear will still be able to participate in class, but will be given modified activities which promote physical fitness and health.

Tuition & Incidentals

Families have the option of paying tuition either in full, quarterly, or on a monthly payment schedule through FACTS Tuition Management. Tuition payments are automatically deducted from your chosen bank account on the 5th or the 20th of each month (May – February). Credit cards are acceptable, however, credit cards incur significantly higher FACTS usage fees.

If for the 2022-23 school year, HMS needs to switch to distance learning only for more than ten (10) consecutive days due to either a county or state mandate:

- Grades K-8: would receive a credit of 10% of the tuition and facilities fees for the month affected by the closure.
- Nursery and Pre-K: would receive a credit of 40% of the tuition and facilities fees for the month affected by the closure. (assuming three (3) days of remote learning)
- Remote learning will continue for all five (5) days if we are mandated to switch to this model for K-8

All credits would be applied to your 2022-2023 tuition.

All incidental charges incurred must be paid through the FACTS system within 30 days of the date on which an invoice is sent. Incidental billing can be set for AutoPay and/or a credit card may be used for these charges.

Student Privacy and Records

- 1. Access to Student Records:** Except for High Meadow School's health personnel and local and state health department personnel, no third party shall have access to information in or from a student record without the written consent of the student's legal guardian. When granting consent, the guardian shall have the right to designate which parts of the student record shall be released to the third party. Personally identifiable information from a student record shall only be released to a third party on the condition that they will not permit any other third party to have access to such information without the written consent of the student's guardian.
- 2. The Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act:** The Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's education records. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. Those rights include:
 - a.** Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review all of the student's education records maintained by the school. For records including information on more than one student, parents will be limited only to information pertaining to his/her child. Schools are not required to provide copies of materials in education records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to inspect the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
 - b.** Student records or other identifiable information are maintained in a secure location to ensure confidentiality. Records that are no longer required or need to be disposed will be done so in a manner that ensures confidentiality and security.
 - c.** Parents and eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records believed 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 commenting on the contested information in the record.
 - d.** Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student before releasing any information from a student's record. However,

the law allows schools to disclose records, without consent, to the following parties:

- i.** School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - ii.** Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - iii.** Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - iv.** Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - v.** Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - vi.** Accrediting organizations;
 - vii.** To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - viii.** Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - ix.** State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.
- e.** Schools may also disclose, without consent, “directory” type 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. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

3. Procedure for Accessing Student Records

- a.** A parent may request to review their child’s student file. Any person requesting to review a student file must request it in writing and submit it to the Director of Admissions and Retention (admissions@highmeadowschool.org).
- b.** The Director of Admissions and Retention will review the request and determine whether to release the information to the requester. If the requester is not a parent or legal guardian, a Consent for Release of Student Information letter will be sent to the parent/guardian for permission. The parent is not required to give permission.
- c.** Once permission is granted to review a student’s file, the requester must sign the Record of Access form in the student folder. If a student has an IEP, the

requester must also sign the Confidential File Access Log form in the student folder.

4. Procedure to Amend or Appeal Student Records

- a.** If a parent or legal guardian believes the education records relating to the student contain information that's inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's right to privacy, they may ask that the record be amended. Parents or legal guardian may express the appeal in writing to the director containing the following information:
 - i.** Information that's claimed to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights;
 - ii.** Records in which the parent/legal guardian believes the information is contained
 - iii.** Basis for the claim (i.e., why he/she believes the information is inaccurate, etc.);
 - iv.** The parent's/guardian's proposed change.
- b.** The Head of School and Curriculum and Instruction Coordinators will review the request and make a determination within fifteen school days of receiving the letter. The Head of School and Curriculum and Instruction Coordinators will provide the parent/legal guardian with a written response to the request and explain the reason for his/her decision. If the action is warranted, the school may decide to remove, modify, or expunge the information in the record. Removing, modifying, or expunging an entry isn't an admission that the entry was improper or that any person acted improperly by including the entry on the record.
- c.** If the request is denied or no ruling is made in allotted time, the parent or guardian has the right to appeal the decision to the Board of Directors within twenty school days from the adverse ruling or failure to rule.
- d.** A hearing officer will be appointed by the Board of Directors. A hearing will be held within twenty school days after the parent/guardian files the request with the Board, and the parent will be given notice of date, place, and time of the hearing with sufficient advance notice.
- e.** A parent/guardian will be given the opportunity to present their appeal and may be assisted or represented by individuals of his or her choice or own

expense. The hearing officer’s decision must be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing.

- f. A written report containing a summary of the evidence and the reasons for the decision will be issued fourteen calendar days from the conclusion of the hearing. If necessary, the hearing officer will direct the Head of School and Curriculum and Instruction Coordinators to amend the records accordingly and inform the parent in writing. The hearing officer’s decision will be final. If the parent doesn’t agree with the decision, the parent has the right to place a statement in the record commenting on the contested information or stating why they disagree with the decision of the hearing officer, or both.
- g. If you have any questions regarding the procedure for accessing student records, please contact the school office at 845-687-4855.

Staff Directory

Early Childhood/Lower School		
Name	Role	Email
Keri Zurlini	Early Childhood/Lower School Coordinator	keri.zurlini@highmeadowschool.org
Rachel Roozen	Nursery 3s Lead Teacher	rachel.roozen@highmeadowschool.org
Molly Parker-Myers	Nursery 3s Intern Teacher	molly.parker-myers@highmeadowschool.org
Stacey Wenzel	Pre-K Lead Teacher	stacey.wenzel@highmeadowschool.org
Lexi Kandeel	Pre-K Assistant Teacher	lexi.kandeel@highmeadowschool.org
Janine Louis	Kindergarten Lead Teacher	janine.louis@highmeadowschool.org
Krishna Patenaude-Stoever	Kindergarten Intern Teacher	krisha.stoever@highmeadowschool.org
Reta Sorge	Early Childhood Floating Assistant Teacher	reta.sorge@highmeadowschool.org
Bella Kosmacher	First Grade Lead Teacher	bella.kosmacher@highmeadowschool.org
Olivia Harris	Second Grade Lead Teacher	olivia.harris@highmeadowschool.org

Hollie Paynter	1/2 Intern Teacher	hollie.paynter@highmeadowschool.org
Annmarie Leahy	Third Grade Lead Teacher	annmarie.leahy@highmeadowschool.org
Ciara Ferrara	Fourth Grade Lead Teacher	ciara.ferrara@highmeadowschool.org
Jamie Leidner	3/4 Intern Teacher	jamie.leidner@highmeadowschool.org
Upper School		
Name	Role	Email
Chris Bottomley	Upper School Coordinator	chris.bottomley@highmeadowschool.org
Jack Milgram	5/6 Math and 6th Grade Advisor	jack.milgram@highmeadowschool.org
Jazmine Langlitz	7/8 Math and 7th Grade advisor	jazmine.langlitz@highmeadowschool.org
Emily Aptekar	5/6 Humanities and	emily.apterkar@highmeadowschool.org
Clay Drinko	7/8 Humanities and 8th Grade Advisor	clay.drinko@highmeadowschool.org
Peter Myers	5/6 Science and 6th Grade Advisor	peter.myers@highmeadowschool.org
Matt Helffrich	7/8 Science and 7th Grade Advisor	matt.helffrich@highmeadowschool.org
Specials		
Name	Role	Email
Kimberly Carmody	Arts Coordinator and N-4th Visual Arts Teacher	kimberly.carmody@highmeadoschool.org
Amy Park	5th-8th Grade Visual Arts Teacher	amy.park@highmeadowschool.org

Ann Sullivan	Dance Teacher	ann.sullivan@highmeadowschool.org
Allyson Uzzle	Drama Teacher	allyson.uzzle@highmeadowschool.org
Victor Lissabet	Music Teacher	victor.lissabet@highmeadowschool.org
Gabe Guzman	PE Teacher	gabe.guzman@highmeadowschool.org
Administration		
Name	Role	Email
Michelle Healy	Head of School	hos@highmeadowschool.org
Jennifer Bousliman	Director of Admissions	admissions@highmeadowschool.org
Bonita Chase	Director of Finance	finance@highmeadowschool.org
Althea Brown	Child/Caregiver Programming Coordinator	althea.brown@highmeadowschool.org
Cordelia Johnson	Student Supports Coordinator	studentsupports@highmeadowschool.org
Ann Ganter	Buildings and Grounds Coordinator	facilities@highmeadowschool.org
Aaron Lieberman	Technology Coordinator	tech@highmeadowschool.org
AnneMarie Taylor	Operations Manager	operations@highmeadowschool.org
Andrea Minoff	Front Office Manager and Administrative Assistant to the Head of School	contact@highmeadowschool.org
Michael Drillinger	Finance Assistant	michael.drillinger@highmeadowschool.org
Amy Istad	School Nurse	nurse@highmeadowschool.org
Margaux Sanchez	Part-Time Communications Support	margaux.sanchez@highmeadowschool.org