



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA



2025-2026 Student/Family Handbook

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Mrs. Michele Hutz
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History

At one time, there were two schools with the Disston name. The first Disston School was built in the 1880's and was named for Henry Disston. It was located on the south side of Longshore Street between Ditman and Glenloch Streets and supported students in Grades Kindergarten through Grade 4. The Henry Disston School was torn down and two story row houses were built on its site. The Mary Disston School, named for Henry's wife, was later built across the street and supported students in Grade 5 through Grade 8. The Mary Disston School was sold to St. Josaphat's Ukrainian Catholic School. It still serves today as a parochial school.

The current Hamilton Disston School was built in 1923. It was named for one of the sons of Henry Disston who was the owner of the Keystone Saw and File Works. Hamilton Disston was a Civil War veteran, Fairmount Park Commissioner and Philadelphia Fire Commissioner. It combined all the grades from Kindergarten through Eighth Grade..The Disston family donated furniture, books and equipment to the school. Members of the Disston family also donated the stained-glass windows in the auditorium. Mrs. Jane Marsden Dixon donated the beautiful wall murals. In 1970, a new Instructional Materials Center was built to replace the "Lehr Memorial" library housed in Room 204.

During its many years, students of Disston School have gone into many fields of business and service in Philadelphia communities and elsewhere. Disston School today serves the educational needs of the Tacony area and has expanded to serve the needs of other Philadelphia communities.

In May 2023, Disston celebrated its Centennial anniversary with Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney and Henry Disston, the great-great-nephew of Hamilton Disston, joining the festivities. Henry Disston gifted one of the original saws created by the Disston family to the school in honor of the 100th anniversary.

Information extracted from Tacony Then and Now, a booklet produced by the 1987 eighth grade class under the guidance of Mr. Alphonse Zarzecki.

WELCOME FROM THE PRINCIPAL

We are pleased to issue the Hamilton Disston School Handbook to all of our families. We hope that this book will be a valuable resource to help guide your pursuit of school excellence. It is our goal to provide a safe, nurturing, and academically challenging program for all children. We aim to foster a school environment where every student can develop to his/her maximum potential, learn the importance of responsibility and cooperation, develop self-esteem and treat everyone with respect and dignity.

You are invited to read about our school in this handbook. Feel free to ask questions of teachers, staff and administration. We welcome your involvement. Please visit us, volunteer, and become active in our learning community. Contents of this handbook may be revised during the course of the school year dependent upon District and School policy and/or procedure changes. Parents will be informed of changes.

Mrs. Michele Hutz
Principal

School District of Philadelphia's Vision and Mission

The School District of Philadelphia is the eighth largest school district in the nation, by enrollment. Located in a historic and culturally rich setting, we are a racially and ethnically diverse community committed to education. We are students, parents, teachers, staff, and community members; we are the School District of Philadelphia.

SDP Vision:

To prepare students to imagine and realize any future they desire.

SDP Mission:

All sectors of public education in Philadelphia will work with urgency to provide every student with the opportunity to achieve positive life outcomes in partnership with diverse families, educators, and community members who are valued and respected.

Hamilton Disston Vision:

To create an inclusive environment that empowers all students to become well-rounded individuals who embody social responsibility.

Hamilton Disston Mission:

Professionally develop our staff in an effort to offer all students quality instruction while exposing them to various forms of technology and incentives. As a Community School, we value our partnerships that enhance the overall educational experience that we provide to all stakeholders.

GENERAL INFORMATION

VISITOR/ VOLUNTEER SIGN IN PROCEDURES:

- All visitors/volunteers must be screened at the front door with ID readily available.
- Upon school entry, proceed to the Main Office with a valid picture ID and sign in with a school representative. (Please include your full name, date, time and purpose of the visit.)
- If approved, all visitors/volunteers will be given a visitor's pass that must be displayed throughout the duration of the visit.
- All visitors/volunteers will be escorted to locations outside of the main office area unless directed otherwise.
- All visitors/volunteers must return visitor's passes to the main office and sign out at the front desk before leaving the building.
- Students will only be dismissed from the main office. Visitors may not request to pick up a student from the classroom.
- All visitors must sign out upon completion of their volunteer/visitor duties.
- Please note that in order to be a volunteer, you **MUST** have the necessary clearances on file in the main office.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

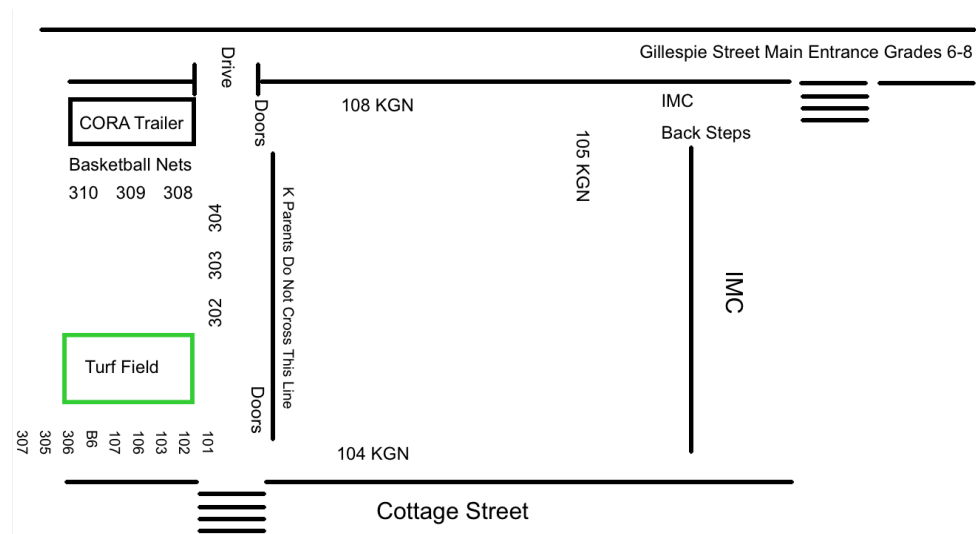
All doors will open to students at 8:15AM. Parents/Guardians may not escort their children to their classroom. Students will enter the building via a specified location according to grade level as identified below:

Admission at 8:15AM

Cottage Yard entrance - Grades K-3

Gillespie Yard entrance - Grade 4-5

Gillespie Main entrance - Grades 6-8



Staggered Dismissal

The school day ends at 2:54 P.M.

Staggered Dismissal Schedule:

- 2:45 p.m.: Kindergarten escorted to their morning lines
- 2:50 p.m.: Grades 1-3 escorted to their morning lines
- 2:54 p.m.: Grades 4-6 escorted to the schoolyard
- 2:54 p.m.: Grades 7-8 escorted to the Gillespie Street Entrance

If we all work together and adhere to the procedures, we can alleviate potentially dangerous situations for students. Always think safety first!

Inclement Weather Admission

Doors will open at 8AM. All K-3 students enter the building through the assigned doors on the Cottage Street side. Students in Grades 4-8 will enter through the Gillespie Street doors. All students are to report immediately to their assigned locations.

- Kindergarten and Grade 1 report to the cafeteria.
- Grades 2-5 report to the gym
- Grades 6-8 report to the auditorium.

On these days especially, please see that your child/children are appropriately dressed for the weather. Raincoats, warm outer garments, boots, gloves, hats, etc. are a must on inclement weather days.

BREAKFAST

Breakfast will be served daily in classrooms until 8:30 A.M.

EARLY DISMISSAL

No child will be given an early dismissal from school unless a parent comes to school to escort the child from the building. Early dismissals will not be granted after 2:15 p.m. Parents are asked not to schedule doctor and dental appointments during school hours, whenever possible. All early dismissals will be recorded in the district's Attendance Monitoring System. Habitual early dismissals adversely affect student learning and may affect student grades.

Any child who leaves school prior to 10:15 a.m. will be charged with an entire day of absence. There will be no early dismissals prior to 10:15 a.m. or after 2:15 p.m. Doctor's notes will be required for doctor's visits that require an early dismissal. These may be brought to the school the next day. On scheduled early dismissal days there will be no early dismissal given, except for emergencies.

Students must be signed out in the early dismissal log at the main office. Note: Children will not be called for early dismissal between 2:15 p.m. and 2:54 p.m.

Parents requesting early dismissals will be asked to provide photo ID, state the relationship to the student, give reason for dismissal, and give their signature. Children will be dismissed only to those listed on the emergency contact form. When confirming identification, all adults who are picking up students must remove their headwear, including but not limited to burqa, chadar, boshiya, niqab, and/or hats. This may be done in private upon request.

DISMISSAL (SCHOOL-YARD HAZARDS)

In the event that our schoolyard is impassable, we will have a modified dismissal procedure. Parents will be notified of this change via Class Dojo and School Messenger.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS AND DISMISSALS

School Closings will be officially announced on <https://www.philasd.org> and KYW-1060 AM. The announcement will state, "All Philadelphia public schools are closed." A specific school will be named only in the event that there is a problem at that school.

Early dismissals and late arrivals will be announced on KYW-1060 AM and on the school district website. Please discuss with your child the possibility of an emergency school closing. Your child should know the name, address, and telephone number of the person you have designated as the emergency contact. As a backup, it is strongly advised that this information is also written in your child's notebook. Please make sure the emergency contact lives as near to the school as possible. Keep all directory information current; home address, home phone number, work phone number, cell number, email address, and emergency contacts.

TWO-HOUR DELAYED OPENING PROCEDURES

Please review the delayed opening procedures in the event of inclement weather or an emergency. It is important to remember the following:

- Student Arrival: 10:15 a.m (breakfast in classrooms)
- Student Dismissal: 2:54 p.m.
- Admission: students will follow normal entry procedures as stated above.

CONTACTING YOUR CHILD DURING SCHOOL HOURS

Parents should make arrangements for pick-up prior to the students arriving at school for the day. Please send a note with your child to school and/ or send a message to the teacher via ClassDojo if there is a change to their dismissal procedure. Please do not telephone school and ask to speak to your child – students will not be called from classrooms to answer telephone calls. Messages will only be given to students in extreme emergencies.

ATTENDANCE

Under Pennsylvania law, all students between the ages of six (6) and eighteen (18) must attend school every day. Once a student is enrolled in school, this includes students in kindergarten, they are subject to this law until age 18.

Definitions

- 3+ Unexcused Absences = Truant
- 6+ unexcused Absences = Habitually Truant
- 10+ Unexcused Absences = Chronically truant

Half Day

- K-8 Schools: A student coming to school two (2) hours after the start of the school day (10:15 a.m.), or leaving two (2) hours before the end of the school day (12:54 p.m.), will be marked as half-day absent.*

*If the child has a note from a licensed healthcare provider (Doctor, Dentist, Psychologist, Psychiatrist etc.) they will be marked as half-day excused (AM or PM). The note must be given to the school upon return from the medical provider, within 24 hours of the visit. If the student does not have a note, the half-day will remain unexcused.

Lateness/Tardy (Late days do NOT count as absences)

- K-8 Schools: A student that comes to school after the start of the school day, but less than two (2) hours after school starts (before 10:15 a.m.) will be considered late.

If the student has a written excuse note from a licensed healthcare provider, it will count as an excused lateness. Early Dismissal (Early Dismissals do NOT count as absences)

Early Dismissal (Early dismissals do NOT count as absences if after 12:54PM)

- A student that leaves school at any other time during the day, outside the parameters set in the half-day absence/lateness procedure, will be marked with an unexcused early dismissal.*

*If the student has a written excuse note from a licensed healthcare provider, they will be marked as excused early dismissal. The note must be turned in within 24 hours of the student leaving school for it to be excused.

- Parental Notice of Absence (Written/Electronic Note)
- Provide written excuse notes to the school within three (3) days upon the student's return to school from an absence.
 - Contact the child's school to verify ways excuse notes may be submitted.
 - Excuse notes must be given to the school within three (3) days upon the student's return to school. If the note is not submitted to the school within the required time frame, the day(s) may not be excused.
 - Excuse notes must include a valid telephone number or other means of contact for verification purposes.
- All absences resulting in a total of three (3) or more consecutive days due to illness will require a written excuse note by a licensed healthcare provider. An excuse note from a healthcare provider may also be submitted in lieu of a parent note for any absence.
- For all absences and those that do not total three (3) consecutive days, parents may submit a written excuse note stating the reason for the absence.
- When a student has been absent due to illness, excused with a parent note, totaling eight (8) days (cumulative), all subsequent absences may require a written excuse note from a licensed healthcare provider.

LATENESS POLICY

Classroom instruction begins as soon as school starts so it is important for children to arrive on time. When a student is not able to arrive on time, the student must fill out a late slip at the main office, and then go to the classroom. Excessive lateness may result in disciplinary action. Any student arriving after the daily morning entrance into the building is considered late.

LEGAL CUSTODY

Parents/Guardians are asked to inform the main office and the child's teacher when legal custody of a child resides with one parent. School personnel can only make decisions about the child (e.g., permission to pick up a child from school) based on official legal documents. It is important for the school to have a copy of the custody decree. Custodial parents/guardians likewise are asked to supply the school with copies of Protection From Abuse orders (PFA).

RELEASE OF A CHILD

A child **will not be released to a parent/guardian who does not have physical custody without the written consent of the custodial parent/guardian.** To determine the custodial parent/guardian, all separated or divorced parents must provide the school with a copy of the court order or custodial agreement adjudicating that determination of custody. The court order/custodial agreement is placed with the student's information.

All individuals must furnish photo identification in order for a child to be released.

LUNCH

Students eat lunch in the cafeteria. Children may bring their lunch or receive a free federally funded lunch.

Students are not to bring glass bottles at any time.

Student Climate Staff supervise our lunch program and recess time. Students play in the yard after eating lunch. Parent volunteers are welcome to help supervise games in the yard at recess and support in the lunchroom.

UNIFORM POLICY

Students at Disston School are expected to be in FULL uniform every school day.

- GRADES K – 5: SOLID Navy Blue Polo or navy blue Disston t-shirt
- GRADES 6 – 8: SOLID Burgundy Polo or burgundy Disston t-shirt
- All Grades: A Disston hoodie
- All Grades: Khaki shorts or black gym shorts (knee length) September-October and April-June ONLY
- All Grades: Khaki or black pants, skirts, or jumpers
- No leggings or bike shorts AT ANY TIME

The following articles of clothing are unacceptable and are not be worn to school:

- Midriff tops, Halter tops, Spaghetti Strap or Sleeveless T- Shirts, Tank Shirts, Undershirts
- Shirts with inappropriate, derogatory or inflammatory printed statements
- Unstrapped shoes, Slides and flip-flops
- Soffe shorts, bike shorts, leggings

- Head wear other than for religious purposes (no sheistys, bandanas, scarves, hats, etc.)
- Sandals, Slides or flip-flops or open-toe shoes

FOOTWEAR

- Sneakers, Shoes (closed shoe) only, Crocs worn in sports-mode only

GYM UNIFORM: Official Disston School Uniform (with sneakers)

PLEASE NOTE pursuant to SDP Policy:

Students may not wear a full face mask, also known as a "Sheisty mask" or "Sheisty" that covers their entire face with the exception of the student's eyes. This includes but is not limited to, ski masks or a balaclava. Masks such as these are a safety concern as it is impossible to identify an individual who is wearing a mask.

If you are in need of assistance in acquiring a uniform, please contact the Main Office and request to speak with a counselor.

LOST AND FOUND

Valuable items found in and around the school should be turned in at the Main Office. Other items are placed on the Lost and Found containers in the auditorium. Please label all belongings, especially jackets and coats, backpacks, and lunchboxes, with your student's name. Students should not bring expensive items to school. Each student is responsible for taking care of his/her own property.

Valuable items and large sums of money ARE NOT to be brought to school. The school will not be responsible for lost personal items including cell phones, headphones, earbuds.

TEACHERS AND PARENTS WORKING TOGETHER

Back to School Night

Back To School Night is an important opportunity for parents and staff to meet. During this evening meeting, parents go to their children's classrooms where the teachers will introduce themselves, explain their classroom programs, and answer questions about the general program and classroom procedures. You will also have the opportunity to talk to the specialist teachers in the school.

Parent/Guardian Volunteer

Please volunteer! Disston School expects parents to volunteer in the school and the classroom. It is the Disston Policy that parents do not volunteer in their child's classroom, but are welcomed to volunteer in other areas of the school.

Volunteers have to participate in mandatory district training. Please contact the main office for details.

- Lunch room/recess yard
- Morning admission yard monitors
- After school bus monitors
- Hall monitors

- Classroom assistance
- Front Desk
- Other (If you have another idea that you'd like to volunteer your help/skills, please let us know!)

The following documents are required to begin volunteering.

When completed, bring your volunteer paperwork to your school's main office.

- **Volunteer Code of Conduct**
- Go to www.philasd.org/FACE/volunteer to read, print, and sign our standards of behavior agreement, called the Volunteer Code of Conduct.
- **PA Child Abuse History Clearance**
- Go to <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home> to fill out. Find directions at www.philasd.org/FACE/volunteer.
- **PA State Criminal Background Check**
- Go to <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp> to fill out. Find directions at www.philasd.org/FACE/volunteer.
- **FBI Background Check OR Signed Volunteer Affirmation**
- If you have NOT lived in Pennsylvania for the past 10 years, go to <https://uenroll.identogo.com> and use code 1KG6Y3 to obtain an FBI Background Check (\$22.60). If you HAVE lived in Pennsylvania for the past 10 years, go to www.philasd.org/FACE/volunteer to print and sign the Volunteer Affirmation.
- **Certificate of Volunteer Orientation Completion**
- You have 45 days from your volunteer start date to complete our Orientation, either online or in-person. Go to www.philasd.org/FACE/volunteer to learn about both options.

School Advisory Council

A School Advisory Council (SAC) is a peer-elected, collaborative team that works to improve student achievement, effective teaching in the classroom, and parent and community engagement in the educational process.

School Advisory Councils are composed of peer-elected representatives from various stakeholder groups at the school, whose main responsibility is to collaborate with the principal on specific matters that affect student achievement and school improvement.

SAC Responsibilities:

- Meet every other month
- Build consensus with your fellow SAC members
- Focus on improving Academic Achievement, School Climate, & Family Engagement
- Participate in Strategic Conversations by using & addressing school data

Meeting dates and times will be posted on the school's website as well as on the school calendar.

If you are interested in joining the Disston School SAC, please complete an application. Applications can be found in the Main Office or at: <https://www.philasd.org/face/sac/>

COMMUNICATION

All school communication will be shared with families via your child's Google Classroom each Wednesday. Additionally, please check Class Dojo and our school website for updates.

Communication With The Teacher

To contact a teacher, you may:

- Send a note with your child asking the teacher to write to you or call you. Tell the teacher when you will be available at work or home.
- Send a note with your child asking the teacher for an appointment. Specify the times when you can meet – before school, during the day, etc.
- Ask the school secretary to leave a note in the teacher's mailbox. Teachers will not be called to the phone during class time.
- Email your child's teacher on his/her school district email.
- Send them a message via Class Dojo.

Teachers will respond to all communication within 48 hours.

At Back to School Night, the teachers will tell you how they would like you to communicate with them. Our teachers welcome parent interest in their child's education and are responsive to your questions and concerns. A good question to ask is "Is there anything I need to know about or do that can help my child?".

Communication With The Principal

The principal and members of the administrative team are available to discuss your concerns. In an effort to make certain that concerns are given to the appropriate party and followed through in a timely manner, parents will be asked to complete a "Parent Concern Form" prior to being seen by the principal or the team. Someone from the administrative team will respond to your concern within 48 hours, which allows the team the opportunity to investigate any concerns presented.

There is no guarantee that you will be seen before the 48-hour period.

To contact the principal, you may:

- Stop in the main office and complete a "Parent Concern Form." The principal, if possible, will see parents following morning announcements at 9:00 a.m.
- Email the principal at mhutz@philasd.org.
- Call the school office at 215-400-3350 and leave a detailed message with the secretary. Please specify the purpose of your call.

Academic Communication

Academic interim reports are distributed 4 to 6 weeks before a report card is issued. All children will receive an interim report for each marking period. Behavioral interim reports may be issued at any time.

Report card conferences dates are below:

TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 4
Dates: 8/25/25 - 11/10/25 Full Instructional Days: 49 Early Dismissal Instructional Days: 1 Interim Reports Due: 9/30/25 Report Card Conf: 11/24/25 - 11/25/25	Dates: 11/11/25 - 1/21/26 Full Instructional Days: 35 Early Dismissal Instructional Days: 5 Interim Reports Due: 12/11/25 Report Card Conf: 1/29/26 - 1/30/26	Dates: 1/22/26 - 3/24/26 Full Instructional Days: 37 Early Dismissal Instructional Days: 4 Interim Reports Due: 2/19/26 Report Card Conf: 4/9/26 - 4/10/26	Dates: 3/25/26 - 6/12/26 Full Instructional Days: 44 Early Dismissal Instructional Days: 6 Interim Reports Due: 5/5/26

You will receive an appointment notice. If you cannot make the appointment, reschedule with the teacher. This conference is when you and the teacher look at your child's achievement and behavior, and plan what is best for your child. Please come prepared with any questions you may have or information you feel the teacher needs to know. Teachers can only be helpful if they are informed of a problem. The final report card will be sent home with the students in June.

It is important to have honest and objective knowledge of your child's ability levels. Ask the teacher what you should be doing at home to support your child's needs. When you don't understand something, ask questions. Is this behavior typical, or a problem? Get specific information about the seriousness of a problem and what programs are available to help. An action plan with a timetable may be developed. Plan additional times, if needed, to discuss your child's progress.

WEBSITES

The School District of Philadelphia - www.philasd.org

Disston School - <https://disston.philasd.org/>

The Pennsylvania Department of Education- <http://www.pde.state.pa.us>

Parent and Family Portal - <https://www.philasd.org/face/fr/parent-and-family-portal/>

FamilyNet helps you to track your child's progress. It requires you to know the student's School Identification Number and have a valid email address. They offer a link for a free email service.

HOMEWORK

Expect assignments Monday through Thursday each week, in addition to longer-range projects and reports. Please check your child's Google Classroom for daily assignments. Contact the teacher if you do not see regular assignments being given.

MATERIALS and SUPPLIES (including Chromebooks)

Students are responsible for all assigned materials and supplies provided by the school. Chromebooks are issued to every student and tracked according to the student's ID number. Damage beyond normal wear and tear may be the financial responsibility of the student's family. Students are not to loan or allow another person to use their assigned Chromebook. Students are expected to always have their materials and their charged Chromebook.

Pursuant to SDP policy, students may not use any device other than a school district issued Chromebook while in school.

EIGHTH GRADE CLOSING EXERCISES

Eighth grade students may participate in closing exercises under the following guidance:

- Pass all academic subjects with a grade of at least a “D” or 60 average.
- Have 4 or fewer disciplinary incidents resulting in suspension in accordance with the [SDP Code of Conduct](#) and [Behavior Matrix](#)

Students who fail to successfully complete the eighth grade academic program and/or behave in an inappropriate manner will be excluded from end of year 8th grade activities. These **anticipated** activities include the 8th grade trip and/or closing ceremonies.

We request your assistance in reviewing the following school rules and policies with your child.

- Students are expected to follow all school rules each and every day until the end of the year.
- Students are reminded that fighting and lack of respect for adults and their fellow students are unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with our school district discipline code.
- Students are expected to complete all class and home assignments.
- “No students may engage in any conduct that jeopardizes the health, safety or welfare of any member of the school community, or in any conduct that disrupts or undermines the basic educational program” (The School District of Philadelphia, Code of Conduct).
- In the spring, a contract is developed and must be adhered to by all 8th graders.

REPORT CARDS

The report card is a way of documenting student progress throughout the school year.

The first, second, and third report cards are distributed to parents/guardians during report card conferences. No report cards will be given directly to students at these times. The final report card is sent home with students on the last day of school in June.

All students in kindergarten through grade eight receive a report card for each of these marking periods. Report cards provide marks for all of the major subject areas, specialty areas, behavior, and effort, as well as an attendance report.

Positive Behavior Interventions (PBIS)

PBIS is a decision-making framework for school systems to implement in order to improve student academic and behavioral outcomes by using universal language and expectations, consistent behavioral teaching practices, consistent behavioral response guidelines, and data to guide procedural and policy decisions.

Research suggests that by having consistent expectations across the school, explicitly teaching behavioral expectations, acknowledging expected behaviors, and handling behavioral violations consistently, the school environment can be positively impacted.

PBIS is not a curriculum or a single intervention – it is a change in the school system's climate.

MTSS- Multi-Tiered System of Supports

What is MTSS? Multi-Tiered System of Supports is a three-tiered framework that can be thought of as a continuum of services, both academic and behavioral, with each tier part of an interrelated process. Instructional practices are evaluated and adjusted based on results of frequent, valid, and sensitive indicators of student outcomes. Any student in need of support can be referred. Classroom teachers or parents can request this support. Students in academic need (behind or above grade level proficiency), social/emotional need, or any other need are eligible for services.

The process is focused on helping the student be successful in the regular classroom setting. MTSS begins with focusing on issues that face groups of students experiencing similar barriers to learning. Teachers meet bi-weekly to discuss academic or behavioral concerns and develop a plan to help these students. The second level of MTSS focuses on individual student support. Team meetings are held with parents/guardians and may include your child's teacher, school counselor, nurse, and others who would be helpful in problem-solving for your child. After completion of the MTSS process, students may be identified for support through special education services or gifted support services.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Contact: Mrs. Carly Fluehr Special Education Compliance Monitor 215-400-3350

Disston is an inclusive community of diverse learners that offers special education services based on each child's unique needs.

- Learning Support: Students who receive learning support services attend research-based reading and/or math intervention programs in a small group instructional setting outside of the regular education classroom. Students are identified for this service through MTSS and may acquire help for longer or shorter periods of time depending on individual need. The learning support teacher works in collaboration with general education teachers in order to make accommodations and modify curriculum to help each student while in the general education setting.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Contact: Mr. Melvin Morris, Ms. Jessica Newell, or Mr. David Socha

When should I call the school counselor? The school counselor is concerned with the educational, vocational, personal, and social/emotional development of students in relation to their total school experience. Parents can call the counselor when a child has a problem adjusting to school. The parents of 7th and 8th grade students are to contact the counselor to plan for high school placement and possible career choices.

NURSING SERVICES

Contact: 215-400-3350

The school nurse takes care of students who become sick or injured **during** the school day, administers required medications, provides health screenings, and maintains a comprehensive health record for each student. All students must be up to date on immunizations. Failure to comply with immunization requirements necessitates exclusion from school. Nursing service is provided based on the number of students enrolled and may vary from year to year. The Health Room is located in room 201A .

If your child has a health problem or any physical activity restrictions, please inform the Nurse in September or when you are notified. This information will be included in the confidential medical record and will be shared with the school staff based on their need to know.

In the event that the nurse is not present, the principal, or designee will provide first aid.

What if my child needs medication during the school day? Medications may be administered in the school if necessary. For long term medications, please see the nurse for the School District form, which must be signed by your child's doctor and signed by the parent before administration can begin. Short-term medications (less than 10 days), such as antibiotics, may be given with a signed note from the parent. The time when the medication must be administered should be indicated. All medications must be in the original prescription container with the pharmacy label in place. When the nurse is not in the building, the principal or her designee will administer medication.

Immunization of Students

All pupils must be completely immunized or exempted before admission to any public, parochial, or private school in Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Philadelphia County Board of Health, and The School District of Philadelphia require this. Immunization is required to protect pupils from preventable communicable diseases and their medical and educational complications.

For attendance in all grades Kindergarten-12th Grade, children need the following:

- *Diphtheria, Tetanus, & acellular Pertussis (DTaP) 5 doses
- **Polio (IPV) 4 doses
- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) 2 doses
- Hepatitis B (HepB) 3 doses
- Varicella (VZV) 2 doses

*DTaP - Fifth dose is not needed if DTaP #4 was given after the 4th birthday

**Polio - Fourth dose is not needed if Polio #3 was given after 4th birthday

***MCV4 - Second dose is not needed if MCV4 #1 was given after 16th birthday

For attendance in 7th Grade:

- Tetanus, Diphtheria, & acellular Pertussis (Tdap) 1 dose
- Meningococcal Conjugate (MCV4) 1 dose

THINGS TO KNOW

- Proof of vaccinations, a medical certificate, or an exemption form must be provided to your student's school no later than the first day of attendance.
- Exemptions include: medical reasons, religious belief, or philosophical/strong moral or ethical conviction. A student who is exempt may not be able to attend school during an outbreak of vaccine-preventable disease.
- Students who do not have proof of all vaccinations, a medical certificate, or an exemption form will not be able to attend school.
- For more information on vaccine requirements or how to pursue an exemption, contact your school nurse, visit philasd.org/vax or call (215) 400-5VAX. Immunizations are also available at Philadelphia city health centers.

CELL PHONES / ELECTRONIC DEVICES

In an era of cell phones, smartphones and other electronic devices which can easily photograph and instantly share those photographs and messages, it has become a distraction to the primary purpose of students attending school which is to learn.

In an effort to maintain an optimal learning environment for all of our students and to ensure safety and limit distractions, we request your support as we curtail the student use of cellphones in Hamilton Disston Elementary School.

- Cell phones will be collected and secured by the classroom teacher or in YONDR pouches between 8:15 a.m. and 2:54 p.m. We strongly encourage families to make plans with their children prior to the beginning of the school day for after-school plans.
- Students will not have access to their cell phones during their lunch periods. Students are prohibited from using cell phones in the hallways or in remedial classrooms.
- In the event that your child must call home, a telephone will be available in the main office during lunch periods.
- Health concerns can be addressed using the telephone in the nurse's office.
- In the case of a family emergency, the office staff will certainly give your child a message or have him/her return your call.

Students will be expected to comply with these expectations and any student who violates these expectations will be held accountable to the District's Code of Conduct.

Thank you in advance for your partnership with our school and your continued support in order to provide a safe and productive learning environment that limits distractions for all of our students.

Together, we can make a difference!

WEAPONS POLICY

No weapons of any type are permitted on school grounds or on the bus. This rule includes all types of firearms, explosives, knives (including penknives), martial arts equipment, and any other item that could be classified as a weapon, including any toy replicas. Furthermore, no object may be used to intimidate or threaten other students. Students who violate this rule will be subject to disciplinary action and police arrest.

BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

Bullying is an intentional electronic, written, verbal, nonverbal, psychological or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in and/or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent, or pervasive.:

- Substantial interference with a student’s education
- Creation of a threatening and hostile learning environment
- Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of school.

Bullying is characterized by the following three (3) criteria:

- It is intentional or deliberate aggressive behavior or harm doing
- It is carried out repeatedly over time
- It occurs within an interpersonal relationship where there is an imbalance of power

Bullying should always be reported to an adult. All allegations of bullying will be investigated and acted upon.

We fully support, uphold, and endorse The School District of Philadelphia’s Code of Student Conduct and utilize the approved corrective actions. The Code of Conduct can be found [HERE](#)

SCHOOL DAY INFORMATION

Bell Schedule

Grades K-8

8:05 AM Start Time for Teachers
8:15 AM Start Time for Students
8:15 AM- 8:30AM Admission & Breakfast
2:54 PM Dismissal

8:15 AM	School Begins & Breakfast
8:30 AM – 8:54 AM	Community Meeting
8:54 AM – 9:39 AM	1st Period
9:39 AM- 10:24 AM	2nd Period
10:24 AM- 11:09 AM	3rd Period
11:09 AM- 11:54 AM	4th Period
11:54 AM- 12:39PM	5th Period
12:39 PM - 1:24 PM	6th Period
1:24PM –2:09 PM	7th Period
2:09 PM - 2:54 PM	8th Period
2:54 PM	Dismissal

SCHOOL ADDRESS:

6801 Cottage Street
Philadelphia, PA 19135

TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

Main Office: 215-400-335

Fax Number: 215-400-3351

POLICY 226 STUDENT SEARCHES

ADOPTED: April 27, 1981

REVISED: February 15, 2018

The Board of Education (“Board”) is committed to maintaining School District of Philadelphia (“District”) schools as safe, secure, and welcoming places for students, staff, and parents. The Board is also committed to the goal of providing schools with the means to maintain a safe climate for all students and staff in a manner which reasonably balances limited intrusions on individual freedoms against the vital public interest in preserving an atmosphere conducive to education in our schools. The purpose of this policy is to establish a transparent and standardized search process. This process aims to improve student security while promoting each student’s dignity and minimizing negative effects of the search process.

Authority

The Pennsylvania School Code and Department of Education Regulations require the Board to adopt a reasonable policy regarding student searches. [1][2]

School officials have the authority to lawfully search students or their belongings, including lockers, automobiles, electronic devices, purses, backpacks, clothing, and other possessions, without a warrant, when in school, on school grounds, or when otherwise under school supervision, if there is a reasonable suspicion that the place or thing to be searched contains prohibited contraband; material that would pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the school population; or evidence that there has been a violation of the law, Board policy, or school rules. The scope and extent of searches must be reasonable in relation to the nature of the suspected evidence, contraband, or dangerous material and to the grounds for suspecting that it may be found in the place or thing being searched. [1][2][3][4]. A reasonable search requires an articulable basis of facts and cannot be retaliatory, discriminatory, or capricious.

The District has a compelling interest in protecting and preserving the health, safety, and welfare of the school population, which under certain circumstances may warrant general or random searches of students and their lockers, vehicles, or other belongings without individualized suspicion, or prior warning, for the purpose of finding or preventing entry onto school property of controlled substances, as defined by [Policy 227](#) - Controlled Substances/Paraphernalia; weapons, as defined by [Policy 218.1](#) - Weapons; or other dangerous materials. [5][6][7] This includes the right to conduct general point of entry searches.

Hamilton Disston Elementary School

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

School Year 2025-2026

Revision Date: March 27, 2025

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, Hamilton Disston Elementary School receives Title I, Part A funds and therefore must jointly develop with, agree on with, and distribute to parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy that contains information required by section 1116(b) and (c) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The policy establishes the school's expectations for parent and family engagement and describes how the school will implement a number of specific parent and family engagement activities, and it is incorporated into the school's plan submitted to the local educational agency (LEA).

Hamilton Disston Elementary School agrees to implement the following requirements as outlined by Section 1116:

Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under Title I, Part A, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school parent and family engagement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan under Section 1114(b) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

-Update the school parent and family engagement policy periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school, distribute it to the parents of participating children, and make the parent and family engagement policy available to the local community.

-Provide full opportunities, to the extent practicable, for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under Section 1111 of the ESSA in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand.

-If the schoolwide program plan under Section 1114(b) of the ESSA is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the local educational agency.

-Be governed by the following statutory definition of parent and family engagement and will carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition:

Parent and Family Engagement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:

(A) Parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning

(B) Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school

(C) Parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child

(D) Other activities are carried out, such as those described in Section 1116 of the ESSA

DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE SCHOOL WILL IMPLEMENT REQUIRED SCHOOL PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS
03/27/2025

Section A: JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Hamilton Disston Elementary School will take the following actions to involve parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely manner in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs, including opportunities for regular meetings, if requested by parents, to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their child and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.

At the March 27, 2025 Parent Meeting, staff and parents were invited to review and discuss the Parent and Family Engagement Policy and School Compact. During this time all stakeholders had an opportunity to make suggestions, highlight best practices and identify areas that require improvement. Additionally, parents are invited to the Winter Title I meeting where information is shared about the following school year. Parents are invited to share their feedback continuously throughout the school year.

Parents are also encouraged to participate in the School Family Engagement survey that is also used as a tool to collect parent feedback regarding the current Title I programs, policies and family engagement.

Section B: ANNUAL TITLE I MEETING

Hamilton Disston Elementary School will take the following actions to conduct an annual meeting, at a convenient time, and encourage and invite all parents of participating children to attend to inform them about the school's Title I program, the nature of the Title I program, the parents' requirements, the school parent and family engagement policy, the schoolwide plan, and the school-parent compact.

During our Back to School Night in the fall (September 2025) we will hold our Annual Title I Parent Meeting. At this meeting parents are informed about Title I funds and how they are utilized in the school as well as other requirements of Title I, parent rights and responsibilities, the state's academic content standards and assessments, ways to work with educators as equal partners and monitor student progress. Also information about the school curriculum is given to parents.

Section C: COMMUNICATIONS

Hamilton Disston Elementary School will take the following actions to provide parents of participating children with (1) Timely information about the Title I programs, (2) Flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, (3) transportation, child care or home visits, as such services relate to parent and family engagement and may use Title I funds and (4) Information related to the school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

Teachers will communicate with parents about important events, academic news and behavioral concerns via Class Dojo. Parents will receive training on how to utilize the Family Portal to keep informed about their child's progress.

Parents will have an opportunity to meet with teachers 3 times a year during Parent/Teacher Report Card Conferences. Meetings and conferences are held at times during the daytime as well as in the evenings in an effort to allow for the greatest parent participation.

All communication from the school is sent home in language that is accessible to parents and in the languages spoken at home, to the extent possible. The Office of Family and Community Engagement supports the school in providing interpretive and translation services into multiple languages upon request and as needed.

Section D: SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT

Hamilton Disston Elementary School will take the following actions to jointly develop with parents of participating children a school- parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state's high standards.

Parents were invited to a meeting on March 27, 2025 that centered on the Parent and Family Engagement Policy and the School-Parent Compact. Next year, one meeting will be held in the Winter and the other in the Spring to provide parents with the opportunity to voice their opinions and discuss the needs of the school.

Section E: RESERVATION OF FUNDS

If applicable, Hamilton Disston Elementary School will take the following actions to involve the parents of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent and family engagement is spent by:

During the Back to School Night (September 2025), parents will be informed on how the school Title I funds are utilized. In the Fall and Winter Title I Parental Input meetings will be held to discuss how funds are allotted and receive input from the parents about the use of the 1% Title I parent set aside.

Parents will also have an opportunity to express their thoughts via the school level Parent Survey distributed in the Fall. The 25-26 budget was reviewed with parents on March 27, 2025.

Section F: COORDINATION OF SERVICES

Hamilton Disston Elementary School will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement programs and activities with other Federal, State, and local programs, including public preschool programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children by:

Disston Elementary will reach out to local community organizations to build partnerships. Parent workshops will be held at various times.

A variety of activities will be offered to parents so that they can participate in their child's education.

Section G: BUILDING CAPACITY OF PARENTS

Hamilton Disston Elementary School will build the parents' capacity for strong parent and family engagement to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school and the community to improve student academic achievement through the following:

- Providing parents with a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessments used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the challenging State academic standards; and
- Materials and training to help parents to work with their child to improve their child's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), as appropriate, to foster parent and family engagement
- Providing assistance to parents of participating children, as appropriate, in understanding topics such as the following:
 - The challenging State's academic standards
 - The State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments
 - The requirements of Title I, Part A
 - How to monitor their child's progress
 - How to work with educators to improve the achievement of their child

Time will be allotted during some of our professional development sessions to a joint meeting between parent representatives and the staff at Disston. It will be during these meetings that the School Improvement Plan and the common Core Curriculum will be discussed and suggestions made. The following is a list of tentative parent workshops:

September 2025 – Back to School Night/Requirements of Title I (including topics a through e listed above)

December 2025 – Parental Involvement Policy and School Compact – discuss, review and revise

November 2025 Parent Volunteer Training Session

November 2025 – Understanding Your Child's Report Card and Questions to Ask Your Child's Teacher/How to Progress Monitor

December 2025 – Accessing Family Portal

January 2026 – Parent Volunteer Training Session

February 2026 – Muffins with Mom

March 2026 – Donuts with Dad

April 2026 – Parent Volunteer Training Session

May 2026 – Summer Activities

Section H: BUILDING CAPACITY OF SCHOOL STAFF

Hamilton Disston Elementary School will provide training to educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school by:

The results of the parent surveys will be shared with staff as part of a professional development on effective parent engagement and communication, held on one of the district PD days in the Fall or Winter.

Time will be allotted during professional development sessions on strategies to increase parental involvement.

Parents will be encouraged to attend some professional development sessions to interact with teachers.

Hamilton Disston Elementary School will provide other reasonable support for parent and family engagement activities under Section 1116 as parents may request by:

Teachers participate in district-wide professional development sessions throughout the school year. Part of the session will include strategies to involve parents in the learning process and ways to promote parent engagement. To maximize parent and family engagement and participation in their child's education, arrange school meetings at a variety of times.

Hamilton Disston Elementary School will offer a variety of parent workshops and parent meetings that provide parents with an opportunity to learn and understand how they can better support their children with academic work.

Principal's Signature

Mrs. Michele Hutz

5/30/25

Please Note: The Hamilton Disston Elementary School Staff reserves the right to amend and/or adapt this handbook, including its policies, at any time during the school year.