

# Helen Keller Middle School

## 2010-2011 Student/Parent/Legal Guardian Handbook

Helen Keller Middle School  
360 Sport Hill Road  
Easton, CT 06612

Phone: 203-268-8651  
Fax: 203-268-6105

Website: [www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)

**Joan Parker, Principal**

**Susan Kaplan, Assistant Principal**

Helen Keller Middle School does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, mental retardation, mental or physical disability including, but not limited to, blindness, marital status, sexual orientation, or political affiliations of any kind in any of its programs or activities. (See page 16.)

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**Easton, Redding, Region 9 Central Office**

645 Morehouse Road  
Easton, CT 06612  
(203) 261-2513  
FAX (203) 261-4549

**Easton School District  
Board of Education**

Mr. Alfred Triedel, Chair  
Dr. Dan Underberger, Secretary  
Ms. Regina Bobroske  
Mr. Adam W. Dunsby  
Mr. Glenn Maiorano  
Dr. Vida e. Peskay

The Board of Education meets once a month at 7:30 PM at Helen Keller Middle School. Meeting dates are posted.

**Central Office Administration**

Dr. Michael T. Cicchetti  
Superintendent  
Ms. E. Marie Mas  
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  
Ms. Peggy Sullivan  
Director of Finance and Operations

**Helen Keller Administration**

Mrs. Joan Parker  
Principal, Helen Keller Middle School  
Mrs. Susan Kaplan  
Assistant Principal, Helen Keller Middle School  
Dr. Donna Dekle  
Director of Special Services

**Important School Numbers**

HKMS.....203-268-8651 (FAX 203-268-6105)  
HKMS Website.....<http://www.helenkellerps.org>  
To Report Student Absences.....203-268-8651, press 3  
School Nurse..... 203-268-8651, ext. 415  
Special Services.....203-459-9689  
Board of Education.....203-261-2513  
First Student Transportation.....203-778-2498

## Parent/Legal Guardian Permissions 2010-2011

**Student** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade** \_\_\_\_\_  
(First, middle initial, last name. One form per child.)

**Photography, Audio taping, and Videotaping:** I have read the photography, audio, and video-taking policy in the HKMS handbook for 2010-2011. I understand that these photos, audiotapes, and/or videotapes may be used in school or school system displays at HKMS or around town, the school yearbook, the school website, local and area newspapers, Cable TV broadcasts, podcasts and other possible publications. I provide the following permission for my child. (Board of Education Policy #1112.6)

- Yes, my child may be photographed, audiotape, and videotaped at HKMS.**  
 **No, please do not photograph, audiotape, or videotape my child for any reason.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/legal guardian Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Signature**

**HKMS Handbook 2010-2011:** We have read the Helen Keller Middle School Handbook for the 2010-2011 school year. Our child has been made aware of rules and policies noted within the HKMS Handbook or on the HKMS website and will abide by these rules/policies. I realize that the Easton Public School Policies are available for review on the HKMS website(www.helenkellerps.org). I also realize that I may examine the policies at HKMS or the Easton Public Library.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/legal guardian Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Signature**

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

## 2010-2011 Computer/Internet Usage Policy Permission Form:

**Student** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade** \_\_\_\_\_  
(First, middle initial, last name. One form per child.)

**Computer Usage Policy:** We have read and understand the Computer Usage Policy stated on page 18 of the student handbook. I/We have discussed the rules of Computer usage with my/our child. I/We agree that my/our child will adhere to the policy as stated on this form and in the HKMS Student/Parent/Legal Guardian Handbook 2010-2011.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Legal Guardian Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Signature**

**Internet Usage Policy:** We have read and understand the Internet Usage Policy on page 18 of the student handbook. I/We have discussed the rules of Internet usage with my/our child. I/We agree that my/our child will adhere to the policy as stated.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Legal Guardian Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Signature**

After completion of this form, please tear it out of the handbook and submit it to your homeroom teacher by Friday, **September 10, 2010**.



August 2010

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians:

Welcome to Helen Keller Middle School, or welcome back, as the case may be!

We are beginning another year of educating students at Helen Keller Middle School with a sense of wonder and gratitude. We are truly filled with awe and admiration for the many talents that our students, parents and faculty continue to bring each year to our school.

This past week the energies of our teachers and other staff members were palpable as they began and continued the preparation for the new year. Complementing their work was that of our Parent Teacher Association (Co-President, Laura Jones and Heidi Adair), and our Easton Learning Foundation President (Bernadette Waterman). It is inspiring to observe these organizations strive to provide our students with broadening educational opportunities.

As the year starts, we encourage you to take the time to read and discuss the information contained in this handbook with your child. In particular, we suggest you stress the academic and behavior expectations. As well, this handbook addresses many aspects of our educational system for your handy reference. Keep it close by.

We encourage you to contact teachers, support services or administrators with questions or concerns.

Here's to a wonderful year!

Sincerely,

Joan Parker

Principal

Susan Kaplan

Assistant Principal

**Who's Who at Helen Keller Middle School  
2009-2010**

**Integrated Language Arts**

Baker, Michelle  
Carlucci, Katharine  
King, Jean  
Marusa, Deb  
Moore, Ashleigh  
Schweikert, Karen

**Math**

Brodeur, Cindy  
Cockerham, Art  
Dunkerton, Amber  
Klein, Nicole

**Science**

Culliton, Nancy  
Maggi, Linda  
Ustie, Elizabeth  
Tramontano, Jean

**Social Studies**

Astle, Kyle  
Henry, Paula  
Rose, Jennifer  
Walsh, Brian

**World Language**

Harington, Calico  
Scrivani, Ann  
Solis, Nicole

**Special Education**

Donegan, Tracey  
Pearson, Eric  
Richter, Leslie

**Fine & Practical Arts**

Breyer, David (Wellness)  
Colasanto, Kristen (Wellness)  
Cioppa, Roberta (Art)

Fearn, Ethan (Technology Engineering & Design)  
LaValle, Robert (Music)  
Studney, Jason (P.E./Health)

**Administrative Support Staff**

Csizmadia, Joan (Assistant to the Principal)    DiPalma, Joanna (Office Secretary)    Neff, Barbara (Office Aide)

**Custodial and Maintenance**

Csizmadia, Tom                      Dubail, Mark                      Voight, Robert                      Zultowski, James

**BEST Coordinator**

Buschbaum, Dr. Noella

**Health Office**

Bellenot, Mary Jane, R.N.

**Learning Resources and Technology**

Weinshel, Carol

**Network Administrator**

San Souci, Michael

**Related Services**

Brennan, Janice (Occupational Therapist)  
Cuttner, Nancy (Speech & Language Pathologist)  
Heran, Kimberly (Social Worker)  
Husted, Shani (Special Education)  
Klatt, Meredith (School Psychologist)  
Langlois, Laura (Assistive Technology Specialist)  
Broas, Sarah (Language Arts and Reading Specialist)  
TBA (Math Specialist)  
Sather, Tim (Academic Mentoring Program)  
Thomas, Patricia (Guidance Counselor)

**Paraprofessionals**

Carlson, Marion  
Checca, Maria  
DaSilva, Chris  
Fontana, Muriel  
Loesch, Lynn  
Politi, Maureen  
Stern, Sondra

**Technology Assistant**

Mellen, Lisa

**Parent-Teacher Association**

Jones, Laura (HKMS Co-President)  
Adair, Heidi (HKMS Co-President)

**Easton Learning Foundation**

Waterman, Bernadette (President)

## 2010-2011 EASTON, REDDING AND REGION 9 SCHOOL CALENDAR

July	August	September (20)	October (20/19)
1 2 5 6 7 8 9 12 13 14 15 16 19 20 21 22 23 26 27 28 29 30	2 3 4 5 6 9 10 11 12 13 16 17 18 19 20 23 24 25 26 27 30 31	1 2 3 8 7 8 9 10 13 14 15 16 17 20 21 22 23 24 27 28 29 30	1 4 5 6 7 8 11 12 13 14 15 18 19 20 21 22 25 26 27 28 29

1 - First Day of School  
8 - Labor Day  
9 - Rosh Hashanah

8 - Staff Day for Easton and Redding - No School  
11 - Columbus Day

November (20)	December (17)	January (19)	February (15)
1 2 3 4 5 8 9 10 11 12 15 16 17 18 19 22 23 24 25 26 29 30	1 2 3 6 7 8 9 10 13 14 15 16 17 20 21 22 23 24 27 28 29 30 31	3 4 5 6 7 10 11 12 13 14 17 18 19 20 21 24* 25 26 27 28 31	1 2 3 4 7 8 9 10 11 14 15 16 17 18 21 22 23 24 25 28

24 - Early Dismissal  
25 & 26 - Thanksgiving Recess

24-31 - Holiday Recess  
Includes Christmas Day & New Year's Day

14 - Staff Day for Easton and Redding - No School (snow date - 1/18/2011)  
17 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
24 - Tentative Staff Day for Region 9 - No School

21 - Presidents' Day  
22-25 - Winter Recess

March (23)	April (16)	May (21)	June (9/10/11)
1 2 3 4 7 8 9 10 11 14 15 16 17 18 21 22 23 24 25 28 29 30 31	1 4 5 6 7 8 11 12 13 14 15 18 19 20 21 22 25 26 27 28 29	2 3 4 5 6 9 10 11 12 13 16 17 18 19 20 23 24 25 26 27 30 31	1 2 3 6 7 8 9 10 13 14 15 16 17 20 21 22 23 24 27 28 29 30

18-21 - Spring Recess  
22 - Good Friday

30 - Memorial Day

13 - Tentative Last Day for Region 9 Students  
14 - Tentative Last Day for Redding Students  
16 - Tentative Last Day for Easton Students

**Code:** □ No School: Holidays, Staff Professional Development Days and Vacations

If schools are closed due to inclement weather, additional days will be added to the end of the school year.

\* January 24, 2011, is tentatively scheduled as a professional development day for Region 9 staff members only. It follows the last student midyear exam day and will move accordingly should the exam schedule be adjusted for snow days.

**Approved by the ER9 Boards of Education on March 4, 2009**

**June 8, 2010 - Final Board-Approved Revisions:** (1) A professional development day for Easton and Redding was added on October 8, 2010; (2) the January 24, 2011 tentative professional development day for Easton and Redding has been set definitely for January 14, 2011; and (3) the tentative last day of school for Easton and Redding has been adjusted.

## HOMEWORK

Homework is an important aspect of a student's education. It is a necessary and effective means of reinforcing the classroom learning experience.

Homework usually falls into the following general classifications:

- written assignment
- reviewing class work
- reading homework
- activities/projects

One of the goals of middle school is to learn effective time management skills. Therefore, students need to learn to pace long-term assignments to avoid multiple hours of work on any given night.

While the type and amount of homework will vary by grade level and by subject, it is expected that all students will complete assignments to the best of their ability and in a timely manner. Criteria and specific expectations will be provided for each class by individual teachers. Although written homework may not always be assigned, students are responsible for reviewing material on a nightly basis.

Students are responsible for knowing what assignments need to be done. Students are given homework logs and are required to use them to write down daily and long-term assignments. Parents can check these logs to help monitor their child's homework. Homework assignments are also posted on the HKMS website by team/teacher.

Parent assistance is requested to ensure a quiet time and study area for their child as well as to monitor homework assignments on a regular basis. If concerns regarding homework arise, parents are encouraged to contact the team leader or individual teachers.

The following are **guidelines** for the amount of homework that middle school students should expect:

Grade 6:	60-75 minutes daily
Grade 7:	60-90 minutes daily
Grade 8:	75-120 minutes daily

Please note that these are simply guidelines. Each student works at his or her own pace, and individual time spent on homework may vary. Refer to the attendance section of this handbook for guidelines regarding make-up work due to absence.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #6154, Homework.

## PROGRESS REPORTS AND REPORT CARDS

Through progress reports and report cards, we communicate the academic progress of our students. Both forms of reporting are meant to inform parents and students of how well students are meeting classroom expectations at a particular point in time.

During the mid-point of each marking period, progress reports will be sent home to communicate academic progress or concerns. These reports identify areas of strength and weakness in a student's performance, giving the student an opportunity to focus on areas needing improvement. Progress reports may list either a comment on performance and/or an estimated grade.

On a quarterly basis, report cards are mailed home to all students. Grades reflect achievement of specific criteria in each class.

Letter grades and their numerical equivalents are as follows:

A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A	93-96	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62
						F	< 60

Teachers may also select comments that describe the student's performance in greater detail.

For the 2010-2011 school year, the marking periods will end on November 5, 2010, January 20, 2011, April 1, 2011, and June 14, 2011. Please note that these dates are subject to change, per inclement weather.

## WEIGHTED GRADING

Grades are not weighted for any purpose in the Easton and Redding Schools.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #6146, Weighted Grading.

## EXEMPTION FROM INSTRUCTION

A student will be exempted from instruction on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Bilingual Education or Family Life and Sex Education upon receipt of written request for such exemption from his/her parent or legal guardian.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #6144.1, Exemption from instruction.

### TESTING PROGRAMS

#### *Connecticut Mastery Tests (CMT)*

Each spring the CMT is administered to all students in grades three through eight. This is an assessment of primary skills, which the State of Connecticut determines should be at mastery level as students progress from grade to grade. The test is divided into a math section including concepts, number facts and computation, problem solving applications, measurement, and geometry. The language arts section consists of written communication, reading comprehension, Degrees of Reading Power, and a writing sample.

CMTs are administered for several weeks in the month of March. It is important for students to be present for all sessions. Parents should avoid planning vacations and/or medical appointments during this time period.

When test results become available, they will be mailed home to parents.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #6162.3(a), Testing Program and #6162.31, Test Exclusion.

### COMPARABILITY OF SERVICES

It is the policy of the Board of Education to ensure comparability of services funded by state and local sources in both Title I project schools and non-project schools.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #6161.3, Comparability of Services.

### FIELD TRIPS

School trips for educational purposes will occasionally be sponsored by teams or individual teachers in the school. For any off-campus trip, a student will receive a permission slip, which must be signed by a parent/legal guardian and returned by the date specified. A student must obtain written permission from a parent/legal guardian to participate in a field trip.

Since field trips are considered a privilege, the administration reserves the right to select students for trips based upon their record of self-discipline and classroom behavior. **All school rules and regulations apply to students attending field trips.**

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #6153, Field Trips.

### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Students will not be denied opportunity to participate in any class or school-sponsored activity because of inability to pay for material fees, transportation costs, admission prices, or any other related expenses. Any student who needs financial assistance for school activities should contact the principal to request confidential assistance.

### STUDENT RECORDS

The district complies with state and federal regulations regarding confidentiality and access to student records. Both custodial and non-custodial parents have access to student records unless the school is in possession of a court order stating otherwise. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires that eligible students and parents have the right to:

1. Inspect the student's education records.
2. Request amendments to those records if they are believed to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy acts.
3. Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's records, except to the extent that the law allows disclosure without consent. FERPA specifically authorizes the district to forward school records to school officials of a district where the student seeks or intends to enroll without the permission of the parents or an eligible student.
4. File a complaint with the U. S. Department of Education that the district is not complying with the FERPA law.
5. Obtain a copy of the district's policies for student education records. Copies of these policies are located in the office of the superintendent of schools, in the principal's office of each school in the district, and on the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #5125 (a-d), Student Records.

### DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The middle school will release directory information from student records if appropriate. Directory information means one or more of the following items: student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, photograph, grade levels, electronic mail address, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous public or private school attended by the student.

Except in the cases cited in BOE policy, no personally identifiable information will be disclosed from a student's education records without the prior written consent of the student's parent/legal guardian or an eligible student. Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #5125(b), Student Records – Confidentiality.

## **SECTION TWO – STUDENT SERVICES AND RELATED POLICIES**

### SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES

The guidance services at Helen Keller Middle School are available to assist students and parents in making a successful adjustment to middle school and developing the necessary skills to make the transition to high school. Students who are experiencing any problems or concerns are encouraged to seek the aid of the school counselor. Parents are also encouraged to contact the school counselor to help them navigate through this exciting period in their child's development.

Counseling is an opportunity to talk with someone about things that are important to students. These opportunities to talk may be personal, social, educational or vocational. The counselor will listen and be open and honest with students.

The counselor belongs to the Connecticut Counseling Association and the American School Counselor Association and subscribes to their code of ethics. These standards dictate that counselors keep information confidential, unless disclosure is required to prevent imminent harm to the student or others or when legally necessary.

### CHILD STUDY TEAM

CHILD STUDY Team (CST) is a group of trained, concerned staff members working together to provide early intervention for students with regards to academic concerns, behavioral concerns or social concerns. Parents are notified prior to all referrals to CST.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

The Special Education Department at Helen Keller Middle School provides a range of programs and services for students who have been identified as having special education needs according to federal and state guidelines. The continuum of available services includes consultation with classroom teachers, assistance in the regular classroom, and small group or individualized instruction within the special education setting.

A range of diagnostic services is offered by the school psychologist, special education teachers, the speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, and physical therapist in order to assess student needs and plan appropriate educational programs through the Planning and Placement Team process. Contact the Director of Special Services if you have questions at 203-459-9689.

### 504 GRIEVANCE POLICY

Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensures that no individual will be discriminated against based upon a disability, as that term is defined by the law. The statute also provides that any student with a disability who qualifies under Section 504 and needs or is believed to need accommodations, modifications or services not available through the regular education program is entitled to receive a free appropriate public education. The Easton Public Schools have adopted procedures allowing for individuals with disabilities and their parents or guardians to request accommodations for public meetings and other events, as well as grievance procedures for individuals who wish to file a complaint with the district under Section 504.

At the school level, the school principal is the individual to whom you may direct any complaints or requests for accommodations under Section 504, or any complaints of a violation of Section 504. In addition, any complaints or requests for accommodations pertaining to facilities or services offered by the Easton Public Schools, as well as any complaints of Section 504 violations, may be filed with the Director of Special Services at Samuel Staples Elementary School 515 Morehouse Road, Easton CT 06612, 203-459-9689 or [ddekle@eastonps.org](mailto:ddekle@eastonps.org). A form for these purposes is available upon request from the Director of Special Services or the school principal, or on the web site (<http://www.helenkellerps.org>).

Any complaint filed with the Director of Special Services, whether using the form provided or otherwise, must provide the name of the person(s) or group making the complaint, whether the person represents an individual or group, whether the person has discussed the problem with the applicable building administrator, a summary of the complaint and a requested solution or accommodation.

If you have any questions about this grievance procedure or would like more information, please feel free to contact the Office of Special Services as indicated above, or contact your school principal. A complete copy of the grievance procedures under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is also available on the website (<http://www.helenkellerps.org>).

#### LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS (LEP)

The Board of Education recognizes the need to provide equal educational opportunities for all students in the district. Therefore, if the inability to speak and understand the English language excludes a student from effective participation in the educational programs, the school shall take appropriate action to rectify the English language deficiency in order to provide the students with equal access to its programs. Students who have a language minority or who have "limited English proficiency" will be identified, assessed, and provided appropriate services. Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #6141.311(a), Programs for Limited English Proficient Students.

#### MIGRANT STUDENTS

The district has a program to address the needs of migrant students. A full range of services will be provided to migrant students, including applicable Title I programs, special education, vocational education, language programs, counseling and elective classes. Parents/legal guardians of migrant students will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation, and evaluation of the migrant program.

#### TITLE I PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents/legal guardians of a child in a Title I funded program will receive a copy of the district's parental involvement policy, including provisions of an annual meeting and involvement of parents in the planning, review, and implementation of Title I programs.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #6172.4(a) and 6172.4(b), Title I Parent Involvement.

#### TEACHER AND PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Parents/legal guardians have the right to request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s). They can receive information regarding the teacher's licensing and qualifications as it pertains to the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction, whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status through which state qualification or licensing have been waived, and the baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher as well as their field of discipline. Parents may also ask if their child is being provided services by a paraprofessional and, if so, his/her qualifications.

A notification letter is mailed to parents annually at the beginning of the school year.

#### PROMOTION/RETENTION/PLACEMENT

Students enrolling at HKMS will be placed by the administration at the grade level best suited to them academically, socially, and emotionally. Students shall progress through the grade levels by demonstrating growth in learning and by meeting grade level standards of expected student achievement. Exceptions may be made when, in the judgment of the certified staff, retention or acceleration is in the best interest of the student involved. If an exception is made, there will be prior notification and explanation to the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s), but the final decision will be that of the principal.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #5123, Promotion/Acceleration/Retention.

#### ENROLLMENT

Each child entering the district schools for the first time must present a birth certificate or offer legal evidence of birth data as well as proof of a recent physical examination and required immunizations.

Students enrolled in a school identified for school improvement pursuant to federal law may transfer to another public school within the district that has not been identified for school improvement. The transfer will be allowed in accordance with the law. This district will provide transportation.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #5111(a), Admission/Placement.

## **SECTION THREE – STUDENT CONDUCT/BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS AND RELATED POLICIES**

#### CODE OF CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Students at Helen Keller Middle School are expected to demonstrate standards of personal conduct that are reflected in socially appropriate behavior. Each student is expected to accept responsibility for his/her actions, respect the rights of others, comply with the directions of school staff, and obey the rules and regulations of the school. The responsibility to obey school rules extends to students' conduct to and from school, in and outside of the school building, and during school-related activities.

Students at Helen Keller Middle School are expected to demonstrate the following standards of personal conduct and responsibility:

- Use respectful language when communicating with other members of the school community.
- Be courteous in addressing and responding to staff and other students.
- Treat others with kindness, compassion, generosity and a forgiving spirit.
- Show courage by doing the right thing in the face of difficulty. Follow your conscience instead of the crowd.
- Respect those in authority as well as other students and yourself.
- Cooperate with teachers and classmates to achieve common goals.
- Be responsible and accountable in word and deed. Fulfill assigned responsibilities/tasks with reliability, dependability, and commitment.
- Be trustworthy. Tell the truth and accept responsibility for your actions.
- Demonstrate intellectual integrity by refraining from cheating or copying someone's work and claiming it as your own.
- Demonstrate self-control in words and actions.
- Pursue schoolwork with determination and give it your best effort.
- Demonstrate pride concerning the school environment.
- Dress appropriately in the school environment.

#### ACADEMIC HONESTY

An important part of the program at Helen Keller Middle School is the encouragement of students to maintain the highest standard of academic honesty. There are two factors that are contrary to this goal: cheating and plagiarism. Cheating is defined as the intentional use of someone else's work or material on any test or assignment, or the use of any prohibited means to enhance the performance on an examination. Plagiarism is defined as the appropriating and putting forth as one's own the ideas, language, or creations of another without citing their source.

All parties have the responsibility to promote academic honesty. Teachers will make every effort to create an environment that reduces the pressure to cheat and plagiarize and which makes cheating and plagiarism, if not impossible, at least very difficult. Likewise, students have the obligation to support academic honesty. Students who improperly share their thoughts and materials with others are just as accountable for their actions as those who receive that information. If a teacher recognizes cheating or plagiarism, or even suspects such a case, he/she must take immediate steps to deal with it. Each case will be treated individually. The methods for handling each situation will be the teacher's own. However, in the case of proven cheating or plagiarism, the student will receive a "0" for the particular test or project, the teacher will have a conference with the student, the guidance counselor will be informed, and the matter will be reported to the administration and parents.

We expect that all students at Helen Keller Middle School will live up to the highest standards of academic honesty.

#### GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT DRESS

Students of Helen Keller Middle School are expected to be well groomed and dressed to demonstrate pride and respect for themselves, their fellow students, and their school. Restrictions on freedom of student dress may be applied whenever the mode of dress is unsafe either for the student or those around the student, is disruptive to school operations and the education process in general, is contrary to law, or causes damage. Guidelines are as follows:

1. Outdoor jackets, coats, hats, bandanas, sunglasses, and backpacks must be left in lockers during the school day.
2. Appropriate footwear is required at all times. High-heeled footwear, slippers, and heellies are not appropriate for school and can present a safety hazard.
3. Offensive messages on clothing are inappropriate for school. Sexually suggestive T-shirts, shirts depicting drugs or violence, shirts promoting cigarettes or alcohol, shirts with vulgar language or pictures may not be worn in school.
4. Clothing should reflect basic standards of modesty. Spaghetti straps, midriff length shirts, shorts that do not provide adequate coverage or which have suggestive written messages, and pants that are so worn or baggy that underwear is exposed are not considered appropriate school attire. Straps on a sleeveless shirt/dress or tank top should be 2" in width.
5. Metal wallet chains are not to be worn in school.
6. Any clothing with written slogans across the buttocks is not considered appropriate school attire. In addition, writing on the body is not considered appropriate for school. Pajamas are not considered appropriate attire except when allowed for a fund-raising event

The administration reserves the right to make judgments whether clothing is acceptable. Students dressing outside the guidelines will be required to change.

### CAFETERIA RULES

We all look forward to the lunch period as one of pleasure, refreshment, relaxation, and an opportunity to chat with friends. Since so many students eat at the same time, some rules have had to be established. These rules are:

1. Proceed to the cafeteria promptly and without running.
2. Find a seat where you will stay for the entire lunch period; do not change seats or visit other tables.
3. Do not hold places for friends; there are no reserved seats or tables.
4. Students are responsible for bringing their own lunch money. Do not borrow, lend or give money to your fellow students.
5. Follow directions given by the lunch supervisor, including becoming quiet when the lights are switched off.
6. Running, cutting, pushing, or shoving is not acceptable.
7. All food should be eaten in the cafeteria.
8. Keep your table and surrounding area neat and clean. Each student is responsible for putting his/her trash into the receptacle.
9. Keep your voice at a reasonable level. Shouting is not permitted.
10. The lunch supervisor will dismiss students by tables, provided the area is neat and clean. Students should wait for the teacher to dismiss.
11. Stealing food is not acceptable; selling personal food to peers is not acceptable.

### HALLWAY BEHAVIOR

Between classes, many people are moving through our halls. In order to ensure everyone's safety, we ask students to cooperate with our policies of hall conduct. To avoid congestion, students are asked to move from class to class *by walking on the right side of the hallway*. Remember: running, pushing, and shouting are not courteous or safe behaviors and are, therefore, not permitted. In addition, litter should be disposed of in classroom wastebaskets to keep our halls clean and neat.

### DISPLAY OF AFFECTION

Any display of affection including holding hands is inappropriate in school and is not permitted.

### STUDENT DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

Discipline at Helen Keller Middle School is designed to ensure a safe and orderly learning environment for students. Good discipline is imperative for success at school. All students at Helen Keller Middle School are expected to behave in a courteous manner and show respect to staff and students. Policies, procedures and rules of the school are expected to be followed at school, at school- sponsored activities, and on the bus to and from school. The purpose of discipline is twofold:

1. To protect the rights of all members of the school community to ensure an education free of disruptive influences.
2. To promote the development of responsible attitudes on the part of students through experiencing the consequences of acts which violate the rights of others.

The major goal of all disciplinary action is to bring about a positive change in the student's behavior, with the ultimate goal of developing self-discipline in each student.

There are several types of discipline. Most common among these are: verbal reprimand, phone call to parent, warning, office detention, lunch detention, classroom detention, school community service, removal from class, loss of privilege, or suspension.

In all discipline matters, the student will be called to the office. If the matter is serious enough to warrant a suspension, all due process rights will be maintained:

1. An informal hearing will be held (unless an emergency exists) and the student will be informed of the problem and given an opportunity to explain what occurred.
2. If a suspension is forthcoming, the student and parent/legal guardian will be informed verbally and in writing.
3. There is a right to appeal.
4. Students have the opportunity to make up all missed work (including tests and quizzes) during a suspension.

The following examples of behavior may lead to discipline, including suspensions and expulsions on all such matters occurring on school property, school transportation vehicles, or at any school-related or sponsored activity on or off school grounds. The conduct listed below is provided for informational purposes and is not an inclusive list, nor is it in any particular order.

1. Willfully striking or assaulting others.
2. Theft of property of the school, staff, a student, or others.
3. The use of profane or obscene language or gestures.

4. Refusal to obey a member of the school staff or disruptive behavior.
5. Blackmailing, threatening, or intimidating behavior.
6. Possession, sale or use of alcoholic beverages or drugs. This includes, but is not limited to alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, LSD, inhalants, barbiturates, stimulants, "look-alike drugs," hallucinogens, and anabolic steroids. \*
7. Possession, sale, or use of weapons. This includes, but is not limited to pistols, revolvers, rifles, shotguns, deadly weapons, dangerous instruments, or martial arts weapons. \*
8. The destruction or threat of destruction of real or personal property, i.e., cutting, defacing, or otherwise injuring property in any way.
9. Possession, sale, or use of fireworks, explosives, or other incendiary devices. \*
10. Creating a disturbance.
11. Defiance of school rules or the authority of teachers, supervisors, or administrators.

\* Will also result in police referral and recommendation for expulsion.

A meeting of the Crisis Team and a psychiatric/psychological evaluation of a student may also be required in some of the aforementioned situations.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #5114(a-g), Student Discipline and Due Process.

#### VIOLENT AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR, BULLYING

Behaviors that are violent and aggressive will not be tolerated and shall result in immediate action by the school system. Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #5131, 5131.21(a), 5131.7, 5131.9 Violent and Aggressive Behavior, Bullying.

#### BULLYING

The Board of Education promotes a school climate, conducive to teaching and learning, that is free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore it shall be the policy of the board that bullying of a student by another student is prohibited.

Bullying is defined by the law as any overt acts by a student or groups of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity. Bullying which occurs outside of the school setting may be addressed by school officials if it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school.

The school district will:

1. Permit anonymous reports of bullying by students and written reports by parents or guardians;
2. Require teachers and other school staff to notify school administrators of bullying acts they witness and students' report the receive;
3. Require school administrators to investigate parents' written reports and review students' anonymous reports;
4. Require each school to maintain a publicly available list of the number of verified bullying acts that occurred there;
5. Require each school to have an intervention strategy for school staff to deal with bullying, including language about bullying in student codes of conduct; and
6. Require notice to parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying. The notice shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian if requested. The notice must describe the school's response and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying.
7. Require the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing reported incidents of bullying of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual; and
8. Require students to be notified annually of the process by which they may make reports of bullying.

#### DETENTIONS ASSIGNED BY CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Teachers may detain students for several reasons including incomplete homework, failure to complete assigned work, or disruptive behavior during class. A detention must be served on the day required by the teacher. 24-hour notice will be given for detentions. Students may waive the 24-hour notice and serve the detention on the same day.

#### CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

Students transported by bus are expected to be courteous to the bus driver and their fellow students. Student behavior must not interfere with the driver's ability to proceed safely. All school rules are in effect on the ride to and from school. The bus driver has a teacher's authority and responsibility over all students on the bus. School transportation privileges are extended to students conditional upon satisfactory behavior on the bus. Disciplinary actions will result from misconduct on the bus and may include withdrawal of bus-riding privileges. Students are expected to adhere to the following bus rules:

1. Be at your bus stop on time and wait for the bus in a safe place.

2. Enter the bus in an orderly manner. Refrain from pushing and shoving.
3. Follow the instructions of the bus driver.
4. Always remain in your seat when the bus is in motion.
5. Keep your head and arms inside the bus.
6. Keep aisles clear at all times.
7. Remain quiet and orderly.
8. Be courteous to your driver and peers.
9. Keep the bus clean and do not damage seats or equipment.
10. Be alert to traffic when approaching or leaving the bus.
11. **Ride your assigned bus and get off at your regular stop.**
12. Follow all general school rules.
13. In case of emergency:
  - Listen for instructions of the driver.
  - Do not touch emergency equipment unless told to do so.
  - If it is necessary to exit through the emergency door, students should:
    - Be careful (duck head, flex knees).
    - Get away from the bus - others are following.
    - Have hands free. Leave books, etc. on the bus.
  - In the event of a bus accident, stay on the bus until other instructions are given.
  - Do not exit the emergency door unless told to do so.

**ANY DAMAGE DONE BY A STUDENT TO THE BUS MUST BE PAID FOR BY THE STUDENT.**

**A written request signed by a parent/legal guardian and approved by the principal is required in order for any student to be dropped off anywhere but his/her regular bus stop. Note: There is a limit of one guest per student.**

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #5131.1, Bus Conduct; 3541.35, Bus Driver Safety.

**SMOKING/USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS**

HKMS maintains a smoke-free environment. The Board of Education policy prohibits smoking or the use of tobacco products by anyone on the HKMS campus. This includes staff, students, or visitors to HKMS.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #5131.61, Smoking and the Use of Tobacco.

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

It is the policy of the board to prevent and prohibit the possession, use, and/or distribution of any drug (except as duly authorized through the nurse), or drug paraphernalia at any time on school property, at school-sponsored events or on school-provided transportation.

All violations of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Policy #5114 and #5131.6, which can be located on the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)). Disciplinary procedures should be administered according to the situations described in the regulations.

**SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

Policy and regulations regarding Search and Seizure, (#5145.12) can be found on the HKMS website (<http://www.helenkellerps.org>).

**DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 states that no person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #4118.1 (a-d), Prohibition of Discrimination and Harassment.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment is against state and federal laws. It is unwelcome sexual attention from peers, teachers, staff or anyone with whom the victim may interact. Any person who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should report the alleged misconduct immediately.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy # 5145.51, Sexual Harassment.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The use of IPODs, walkmans, disc players and cell phones are prohibited during the regular school day. These items must be stored in lockers or backpacks upon entering the building. In no case will any personal communication device be allowed that provides for a wireless, unfiltered connection to the Internet or which has the capacity to take photographs of any kind.

#### PERSONAL PROPERTY/VALUABLES

Do not come to school with excessive amounts of money or valuables. If a student is bringing in money for a school activity, please have a check made payable to: **HELEN KELLER MIDDLE SCHOOL ACTIVITY FUND.**

If personal items are lost, damaged or stolen, or money is missing, please understand that the school carries NO INSURANCE that will cover the loss. Therefore, we advise the utmost care be taken with personal property, the property of other students, the staff and the school.

Handheld video games, DVD players, or toys of any kind are not allowed in school. Skateboards are prohibited on school property. Such items will be confiscated and brought to the office. In certain cases, parents will be asked to retrieve items.

#### LOCKERS AND SCHOOL PROPERTY

Corridor lockers may be used at any time during class break; however, this is not an acceptable excuse for tardiness. During class, a teacher's permission is required (pass) to go to one's locker.

It is the responsibility of the student to keep lockers neat and clean and in good repair. Locker doors should be closed quietly and securely. It is also the student's responsibility to keep his/her locker locked at all times with the school provided combination lock. Lockers may be inspected if the administration has reason to suspect that materials that are illegal or potentially injurious to members of the school community are kept on school property. Students are not permitted to open or use another student's locker. All textbooks are the property of the Town of Easton and are expected to be given proper care. Each student is responsible for his/her assigned books. All textbooks should be covered. Students defacing school property will be responsible for replacement costs and subject to disciplinary action.

#### COMPUTER USAGE GUIDELINES

Guidelines for ethical use of computers at Helen Keller Middle School are based on guidelines from the Easton/Redding/Region 9 District Policies and from the Computer Ethics Institute's suggestions for schools.

- Show consideration and respect in all computer use.
- Do not drink or eat near computers.
- Be considerate of students working near you – do not interrupt their work.
- Respect security systems in place on computers and the network – do not attempt to by pass security or tamper with other student's files.
- Passwords may not be shared.
- ONLY software provided by the school may be used.
- Avoid damaging hardware, software or peripheral equipment, including speakers, headphones, mice, printers, keyboards or any other accessories that are used for accessing computers or network.
- Return all mobile notebook carts, LCD projector carts or other equipment in clean and orderly condition.
- Use software and hardware appropriately for school projects. Inappropriate or disrespectful use may result in restriction of network access and privileges.
- Avoid plagiarism. Document all information gathered from the Internet and do not present words and ideas of others as your own.
- Preferred methods of transporting student work between home and school is by CD or USB memory key. If floppy disks are used, please use only those provided by the school to avoid recurrent problems with malfunctioning diskettes and lost files.

**Every student and his/her parent or legal guardian is required to sign an Acceptable Use Agreement found in the front of this assignment/handbook. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in restriction of access to the Internet and/or disciplinary actions.**

Teachers have the ability to view work within student computer folders for grading purposes. Please refer to the HKMS website (<http://www.helenkellerps.org>) for Board of Education Policy # 6141.321, Acceptable Use in School of the Internet and Other Networks.

#### COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE

Computers should be viewed as an educational tool similar to books, videos, CD-ROMs, periodicals and other information sources. Because it is impossible to predict or contract what information might be accessed, it is the responsibility of students and staff to adhere to this Acceptable Use Policy.

Easton/Redding/Regional School District Number 9 requires responsible and ethical behavior on the part of all Internet users. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in restriction of access to the Internet and/or disciplinary actions.

Responsible use of the computer and Internet includes, but is not limited to:

- Research
- Instructional activities
- Electronic mail

Irresponsible use includes, but is not limited to:

- Any illegal activity
- Using electronic mail to harass others
- Using the Internet for monetary gain
- Vandalism of hardware or software
- Using inappropriate or abusive language/behavior
- Unauthorized access to network, files or Internet
- Misusing and abusing passwords
- Violating copyright law or engaging in plagiarism
- Pornography

All students and staff must sign an agreement to adhere to this Acceptable Use Policy prior to being granted Internet access. Student agreements must be co-signed by either parent/guardian.

The professional staff will supervise Internet access. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in restricted computer access and/or disciplinary action.

#### FINES

Students are responsible for returning all books, materials, and equipment issued to them in appropriate condition. Fines will be issued for any lost, missing, overdue or damaged items. **If a student owes a fine, report cards will be held and a copy of the accountability form will be mailed home instead.**

## **SECTION FOUR– SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED POLICIES**

### ATTENDANCE

#### REPORTING ABSENCES

Communication is an essential element in the total program. **Parents/legal guardians must notify the school's voice mail the evening before or by 7:30 AM on the day of any student absence.** Parents should telephone the school's voice mail at 203-268-8651. If the school receives no notice within the above timeframe, all days missed will be counted as unexcused absences from school. If parents/legal guardians are going to be away overnight or for an extended period of time, they must designate in writing a guardian to act on the student's behalf. The school will inform individual teachers whether absences are excused or unexcused. This will include absences for the full day or part of the day. Students with excused absences from school or class will be given an appropriate opportunity to make up whatever work they have missed in order to complete curriculum requirements.

If your child is late to school, please stop in at the front office with your child to supervise him/her as he/she registers the reason for being tardy.

#### ABSENCES AND HOMEWORK

A student with an illness of brief duration should obtain assignments from another student, refer to the weekly homework log, and/or refer to the teacher's page on the HKMS website for updated homework listings.

If a student is ill for at least three consecutive days, parents should request the homework assignments from the office before 7:30 AM. The office in turn will send out a request to the student's teachers. If the request is made by 7:30 AM of the third consecutive day of absence, the list of homework assignments and any additional materials will be ready for pick up by the end of the school day.

It is the responsibility of the student to make up all assignments missed during the absence within time constraints delineated by the teacher. Usually the student will have three days from the day of return to complete assigned work. In the case of a prolonged absence, special arrangements must be made with the teacher. Please do not request homework assignments for your child unless he/she has been out for at least three consecutive days.

#### CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

School personnel address the issue of chronic non-attendance by referral to the Student Assistance Team to determine causes and make recommendations for remediation. Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #5113 (a).

**TRUANCY**

It is the intent of the Board of Education that district personnel work cooperatively with students and parents/legal guardians to remedy any instances of poor attendance or truancy. Only when all local resources are exhausted is referral to legal authorities recommended.

A “truant” means a child under the age of sixteen (16) who has four (4) unexcused absences in one month, or ten (10) unexcused absences in one academic year. A “habitual truant” means any such child who has twenty (20) unexcused absences within a school year. Please refer to the HKMS website (www.helenkellerps.org) for Board of Education Policy #5113.2 (a).

**TARDINESS**

Time is a resource, and there is a definite correlation between a student’s time spent on learning and academic achievement. The following regulations apply in cases of tardiness.

**TARDINESS TO SCHOOL**

A student arriving at school after the beginning of the first class of the day is considered tardy. Any such student must report to the main office to be recorded as tardy to school.

Arrival after the beginning of the first period will be excused only if a late arrival has been previously arranged by a parent/legal guardian by telephone, letter, or personal conference with a school administrator on the preceding school day or, in a medical emergency, on the day of occurrence. A medical emergency requires medical verification. A note from the parent/legal guardian will not excuse a tardy. Oversleeping, missing the bus, family needs, etc. though unforeseen, are not emergencies and, therefore, are unexcused tardies.

Students are required to be on time for all classes and lunch. Tardiness to classes or lunch will be handled by the teacher in charge. Chronic problems in tardiness will be referred to the school administration and may result in disciplinary action.

**ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

Normal School Day- 8:10 AM to 2:40 PM	Early Dismissal School Day- 8:10 AM to 12:40 PM	Professional Development Minimum School Day- 8:10 AM to 12:10 PM	Delayed Opening School Day- 9:40 AM to 2:40 PM
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**EARLY DISMISSAL**

In general, early dismissals should be avoided, particularly if they require a student to miss any instructional time.

All requests for early dismissal **must be in writing**, signed by the parent/legal guardian, and submitted to the secretary in the main office before the start of the first class on the day for which early dismissal is requested. Phone calls by parents/legal guardians to request early dismissals will not be accepted unless there is a clear family emergency situation.

If an emergency occurs during the day and an early departure is necessary, an exception may be granted by the school administration.

Students who have an unexcused early dismissal will have limited options to make up work missed. Students who have an excused early dismissal are eligible to make up work and are eligible thereafter to receive full credit. Each student is responsible for getting missed assignments and submitting them on the next class day.

Students who are ill may only be excused through the nurse’s office.

**EARLY ARRIVAL**

The only reason for a student to be early, is if he/she has an appointment with a staff member or is a legitimate participant in a HKMS before-school activity.

Students who walk or ride bikes to or from school are to have written permission signed by a parent. Administration, for safety concerns, strongly discourages walking or bike riding to and from school.

**DEPARTURE AT 2:40 PM DISMISSAL TIME**

The only reason for a student to remain at HKMS after bus dismissal is if he/she has an appointment with a staff member or is a legitimate participant in a HKMS after-school activity. HKMS is not staffed to provide supervision for students after school beyond the bus dismissal time. If a student is going to be picked up at the end of a school day by a member of his/her family, the student needs written permission and will be dismissed from the parent pick-up location. Students are to be picked up between 2:40 and 2:55 PM. Students who abuse this policy by remaining after school without being in a legitimate HKMS after school activity will be subject to disciplinary action including detention.

**PERMANENT WALKER’S PASSES**

Permanent Walker’s passes can be obtained by writing a permanent note which stays on file in the office indicating the specific day/days of child pick up and who the child is being picked up by on the given day(s). The pass must be permanently and visibly displayed on the student’s backpack.

### DELAYED OPENING/EARLY DISMISSAL/SCHOOL CANCELLATION

Announcements for change of school will be on the following radio and TV stations:

WICC	AM 60	WEZN	FM 99.9	WTIC	AM 1080
WREF	AM 85	WCFS	AM 1260	WYNH	Channel 8
WLAD	AM 800	WINE	AM 94; FM 98		
WMMM	AM 1260	WMMM	AM 1260		

Weather related announcements are also available on the HKMS voice mail. To access the voice mail, dial 268-8651 and you will be guided through the voice mail menu for information about weather conditions affecting the school day. Announcements are posted on the HKMS website, <http://www.helenkellerps.org> and will be sent to those registered for the HKMS Listserv.

Listserv registration can be accomplished by accessing the Listserv link on the HKMS website. School information and updates will be sent frequently in this manner.

Delayed openings will be one and one-half hours later than the regular school time (Homeroom will start at 9:40 A.M.). Afternoon dismissals are at the normal time. Please be considerate of the situation should bad weather develop or be predicted to develop during the course of the school day. Students are encouraged to ride the bus home should inclement weather develop during the school day.

In the event of a delayed opening, all before-school activities are cancelled.

We utilize a telephone service at Helen Keller Middle School called **Voice Reach**. Voice Reach delivers a message to all parents/guardians in a timely manner in the event of an emergency school closing. The message will be delivered to a "live" voice, an answering machine, or a voicemail system. One attempt to the phone number on record (usually the home phone number) will be made. A list of all unsuccessful calls is automatically delivered to HKMS. The types of emergencies that will activate this system are: an early snow dismissal, a power outage, a water problem, or any other unexpected reason for closing school. As always, information regarding school closings will be posted in the usual manner as aforementioned in this handbook. Mrs. Parker, school principal, will send a letter to all parents that will be included in the summer mailing showing the phone number that will be contacted.

### VACATIONS

Please understand that family vacations are not considered a valid reason for absence. While teachers will allow students to make up missed assignments, tests and quizzes, the loss of classroom participation and instruction is difficult to recoup and may adversely affect a student's performance and grade. Teachers are not required to prepare work in advance for vacation related absences or to re-teach concepts when the student returns from vacation. Parents are encouraged to schedule vacations when school is not in session.

### HOMELESS STUDENTS

Homeless students, as defined by federal and state statutes, residing within the school district shall be entitled to free school privileges. Students residing in a temporary shelter are entitled to free school privileges from the district in which the shelter is located or from the school district where they would otherwise reside if not for the placement in the temporary shelter. The local liaison for homeless children is Dr. Donna Dekle, Director of Special Services.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #5118.1, Homeless Students.

### TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation is provided for all students. Refer to page **15-16** of the student handbook for issues related to student conduct on the bus.

Students who are transported to and from school by a parent/legal guardian or other adult must follow the route for drop-off/pick-up circle. Students should not arrive any earlier than 7:30 AM unless they have a planned before-school activity.

**A written request signed by a parent/legal guardian and approved by the principal is required in order for any student to be dropped off anywhere but his/her regular bus stop.** Students may only be dropped off at pre-existing bus stops. NO EXCEPTIONS. No students will be allowed to ride a bus other than their own without a parent note and office bus pass. Only one guest may accompany each student per bus ride.

Any complaints regarding bus transportation should first be referred to First Student at 778-2498. The contact at Central Office for transportation issues is the business manager.

### CHANGE IN TRANSPORTATION PLANS

Students must make plans which effect transportation from school at least one day in advance so that parents can put these plans in writing. Changing plans during the day is disruptive to the educational process. In an emergency, parents may call the office no later than 12:00 PM to inform the school of the change in transportation arrangements. Parents/legal guardians must be prepared to confirm their identity.

On a day there is an unplanned early dismissal because of inclement weather, students will not be allowed to use the office phones. In **bad weather**, please listen to the radio stations listed previously and check with the HKMS Voice Mail 203-268-8651, for announcements concerning early dismissals. This information will also be sent via the Listserv.

## **SECTION FIVE – HEALTH AND SAFETY AND RELATED POLICIES**

### **SCHOOL HEALTH**

A registered nurse is on duty full time. To reach the Health Office, dial 268-8651 x415. For general information, access the Health Office website via the For Parents link on the HKMS website home page. The school nurse is available to render first aid when accidents occur at school and when children become ill after arrival. A student who has been sick at home should not leave home nor should he/she return to school until there is complete recovery.

A student must be **24-hours fever-free, and 24 hours free of vomiting or diarrhea** before he/she returns to school. We urge that students who have not been well stay home until they have fully recovered. Students who are absent from school may not participate in after school activities.

#### **Factors That Influence Student Health During The “Tween” and Teen Years:**

1. Sleep: Adolescents require a minimum of eight to nine hours of uninterrupted sleep per night for optimal school performance, behavior control, and mood.
2. Diet: Please make sure your child has a nutritious breakfast before school, and a snack if he/she is on a later lunch schedule. Encourage proper nutrition, including at least eight tall glasses of water per day.
3. Exercise: Some form of sustained, regular, aerobic exercise contributes significantly to a child’s current and future overall health.
4. Rest and Leisure Time: Adolescents need time to do “nothing” every day. This promotes good emotional well-being.

#### **Guidelines For Keeping A Child Home From School:**

1. Fever > 100 degrees - Must be fever-free for 24 hrs. before returning to school
2. Nausea and/or vomiting - Must not have vomited within 24 hrs. prior to returning to school
3. Diarrhea - Must not have had diarrhea within 24 hrs. prior to returning to school
4. Confirmed Strep Throat, Conjunctivitis (“pink eye”) -Until treated for 24 hours.
5. Mononucleosis – As advised by physician (usual considerations: fever-free for 24 hours, rested, eating normally and able to sustain at least a half day of academic activity).
6. Varicella (Chicken Pox) - Children with chickenpox are contagious for 1-2 days before the rash appears and continue to be contagious until all the blisters are crusted over (usually 6-8 days).
7. Pediculosis (Head Lice) - Up to the discretion of school personnel (school nurse & principal)

**Reporting an Absence:** Parents/legal guardians must notify the school’s voice mail of any student absence. The number to call is 203-268-8651. **THE REASON FOR THE ABSENCE MUST BE GIVEN**, as the information is vital in our efforts to assess, monitor and make recommendations for school and community wellness.

**Emergency Contact Form:** Each student must have an emergency information form on file in the Health Office. If an illness or serious injury occurs, the nurse will first contact the parent/legal guardian and, if unable to reach the parent/legal guardian, will then contact the emergency backup person(s) listed. Please make sure that this information is kept up-to-date.

**Medications:** As mandated by Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-212a, medications (both prescribed and over-the-counter) may only be administered by the school nurse(s) or designated/trained staff member(s). An Authorization for Administration of Medication form must be on file and completed by an authorized practitioner (physician, dentist, advanced practice R.N., or physician’s assistant) for both prescribed and over-the-counter medications. These forms are available in the Health Office and on the Health Office website. Medications are kept in the Health Office and must be brought to school by the parent/legal guardian/other responsible adult (never by the student) and must be delivered directly to the school nurse, the principal, vice-principal or administrative substitute. No student may carry or have any medication, including over-the-counter medications, in their locker without the permission of the school nurse. In the event that a student requires self-administration of medication, please consult the school nurse.

#### **Health Assessment Requirements**

In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-206, the Board of Education requires each sixth-grade student to have a health assessment **during the sixth-grade year**. According to school policy, this mandated health assessment must be performed between June 1<sup>st</sup> of a student’s fifth-grade year and July 31<sup>st</sup> of the sixth-grade year. It **must** be performed by a legally qualified practitioner of medicine (M.D. or D.O.) who is licensed in this or another state, or by an advanced practice registered nurse or physician assistant licensed to practice in this

state. Completion of the **signed** health assessment is **required for entry into school at the beginning of seventh grade.**

The health assessment must be documented on the State Department of Education's required Health Assessment Record (HAR-3) or "blue form," and must include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Review and update of State-mandated immunizations;
2. Height, Weight, Blood Pressure, Hemoglobin or Hematocrit, Gross Dental, Postural, Vision, and Hearing screenings;
3. Risk assessment for tuberculosis. If the student is in a high-risk group, a Mantoux test for tuberculosis sensitivity must be administered and the test results must be documented on the form;
4. Chronic disease assessment.

**Please return the completed form to the school Health Office by July 31 of the sixth- grade year.**

If a parent or legal guardian (or student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor) objects on religious grounds to:

- The state-mandated health assessment, a signed statement to that effect must be in the student's school health record, or submitted to the school nurse by July 31<sup>st</sup> of the sixth- grade year.
- Immunizations, a signed copy of the *Immunization Exemptions and Exclusions-From-School* form must be in the student's school health record or submitted with the completed HAR-3 form.

If a mandated immunization is **contraindicated for medical reasons**, a written statement from the health care provider, including the reason for continued deferment, must be submitted to the school nurse along with the completed HAR-3 form.

The HAR-3 form is reviewed by the school nurse and filed in the student's confidential school health record. If you have questions or confidentiality concerns, please speak with the school nurse.

**No child will be admitted to Helen Keller Middle School until appropriate medical documentation is provided to the school and approved by the school nurse.**

In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-204a, all students must be protected by adequate immunization. Parents or legal guardians must show compliance by documentation from a physician or local health agency **before the child may attend school.**

#### Special Health Problems

Students with special health problems (e.g., vision, hearing, severe allergies, seizures and asthma) are requested to report to the school nurse at the beginning of the school year or when the problem(s) arise.

All students attending school on crutches must:

1. present written orders from a physician, requiring use of a wheelchair and the note include any restricted activity with the duration of that restriction.
2. report to the nurse upon arriving at school.

#### Appropriate Use of the Health Office

Parents are encouraged to remind students that frequent and/or inappropriate use of the health office will be communicated to the parent, team leader, and administrative staff by the Nurse. This is to confirm the health of the student involved, and to insure availability of nursing staff where they are truly needed.

References:

HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #5141.3, Health Assessments and Immunizations; Policy #5141.21, Administering Medications to Students; Policy #5141.221, Pediculosis (Head Lice).

#### **FIRE DRILLS**

To comply with fire laws, the school conducts fire drills ten times a year. When students hear the signal, they are expected to exit the building quickly, in a silent, and orderly fashion. Under the direction of the teacher in charge, students are to leave the school building in single file, using the designated exit posted in each classroom. Students and school staff may return to the building only when the principal directs them to do so.

#### **ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Formal asbestos management programs have been in place at Regional School District No. 9 and the Public Schools of Easton and Redding since 1987. The purpose of these programs is to identify any Asbestos-Containing Material (ACM) that may be in our schools and to take steps to make sure this material does not present an exposure hazard to the students, faculty, or staff.

The asbestos management program is implemented through asbestos management plans. Separate plans have been developed for each of the following facilities:

Joel Barlow High School

Helen Keller Middle School  
Samuel Staples Elementary School  
John Read Middle School  
Redding Elementary School

These management plans identify the locations of the ACM in our schools and detail our ongoing management program. The management plans also include descriptions of previous asbestos inspections and plans for repair or removal of damaged asbestos-containing materials.

Under our asbestos management program, the ACM listed in the management plans is inspected every six months to assure early detection of problem areas. Furthermore, each building is completely re-inspected once every three years by a Connecticut licensed asbestos inspector to make sure that ACM is properly identified and that the asbestos management plans are up to date.

An asbestos management plan is maintained in each school office. Additionally, a complete set of management plans is maintained in the Superintendent's office at 645 Morehouse Road, Easton, Connecticut. These plans are available for review during normal business hours.

Regional School District No. 9 and the Public Schools of Easton and Redding have designated the Director of Finance and Operations as the person responsible for ensuring that the requirements of our asbestos management program are properly implemented. This individual can be contacted through the Superintendent's office at 203-261-2513.

### **INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT**

The Easton, Redding and Region No. 9 Boards of Education have directed the administration to develop and implement procedures to meet the requirements of the law involving the use of pesticides in school.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is defined as the use of all available pest control techniques including the judicious use of pesticides, when warranted, to maintain a pest population at or below an acceptable level, while decreasing the unnecessary use of pesticides. The primary goal of IPM is to reduce the amounts of pesticides applied by using alternative methods of pest control.

In accordance with state statute, parents/legal guardians may request notification prior to any pesticide application at the school. If you would like to be notified, please send a letter to the school office requesting to be notified. Please include your e-mail address, if you have one, as we are planning to use e-mail as one way of notifying interested people.

### **PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG USE**

School personnel are prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, district medical advisors, school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner.

### **CHILD ABUSE**

All professional school staff, including but not limited to paraprofessionals, are obligated by law to report suspected child abuse, neglect, and/or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receives yearly training in their use. Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment such as malnutrition, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment, or neglect is also considered child abuse/neglect.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #5141.4(a), Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect.

### **SUICIDE**

The Board of Education recognizes that suicide is among the three leading causes of death among young people and, consequently, is a concern to this school system and the community it serves. This district wishes to take a proactive stance in preventing the problem of youth suicide. It is the Board's policy to actively respond in any situation where a student verbally or behaviorally indicates an intent to attempt suicide or to do physical harm to himself/herself.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy #5141.5, Suicide

## **SECTION SIX – COMMUNICATION AND RELATED POLICIES**

### **BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS**

The Board of Education meets once a month at 7:30 PM in the Library Media Center at Helen Keller Middle School. Parents, students, and other community members are encouraged to attend. Meeting dates are posted by the PTA (<http://www.eastonpta.com>), and on the ER9 website.

### **SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION CHANNELS**

To promote student success and help our students develop socially and emotionally, it is important for students, teachers, and parents/legal guardians to communicate throughout the school year. Both formal and informal means of communication are encouraged at Helen Keller Middle School.

- **Open House** - This evening program, which usually occurs early in the school year, is designed to familiarize parents with curricular goals at each grade level and expectations for student performance.
- **PTA *Cougar Connection*** – This monthly publication will highlight specific team and school events, interdisciplinary projects, student and teacher accomplishments, and important school news. The *Cougar Connection* newsletter can be found on the HKMS website and the Easton PTA website (<http://www.eastonpta.com>).
- **Progress Reports and Report Cards** - These are distributed once per quarter. Please refer to this section in the handbook for more detailed information.
- **Personal Contact by phone or e-mail** - Teachers will initiate personal communications via the telephone or e-mail when they are concerned about any aspect of a student's performance. A parent/legal guardian, teacher, student conference or team-parent/legal guardian and/or student conference may be arranged when warranted.
- **Extra-help Sessions** - Teachers will encourage students to participate in before or after-school extra help sessions as needed.
- **HKMS Home Page** – (<http://www.helenkellerps.org>) Our website contains up-to-date information about our school as well as the HKMS Handbook and Related Policies.
- **Listserv** – Parents/Guardians can sign up to receive school news and updates via the HKMS Listserv. Registration can be achieved through the link on the HKMS website.
- **School Publications** – The Student Handbook and the Program of Studies are sources of information, which may be obtained on the HKMS website (<http://www.helenkellerps.org>).
- **PTA** – The PTA is a very active group of parents who volunteer their time and talents to enhance the student's educational experiences at Helen Keller Middle School (<http://www.eastonpta.com>).
- **Team Coffees** – Scheduled several times per school year, these gatherings are designed to keep parents informed about team/grade level events and serve as an informal way for parents and teachers to just talk to each other.

### **SURVEY OF STUDENTS**

No student may, without parental consent, take part in a survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals specific personal or family information.

Please refer to the HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Board of Education Policy # 6162.51, Survey of Students (Student Privacy).

### **STUDENT/PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN COMMUNICATION WITH FACULTY**

Students are encouraged to advocate for themselves and communicate with their teachers and parents/legal guardians.

- Discuss school successes and challenges with parents/legal guardians openly and honestly.
- Request assistance in a subject area, when needed, directly from the teacher. When you encounter social difficulties, seek assistance from the guidance counselor.
- Keep scheduled appointments with the teacher/guidance counselor.
- Request a conference with the teacher to discuss academic progress.

Parents/legal guardians are encouraged to communicate with their children, their children's teachers, and school officials.

- Discuss feelings about school and progress in school with your child on a regular basis.
- Support and encourage your child to learn to the best of his/her ability.
- Promote the development of personal responsibility by setting clear expectations for homework completion and school behavior.
- Support the rules of the school and expectations for student performance and behavior set by teachers.
- Sign all letters, interim reports, and other communications requiring your signature and have your child return them to school within the allotted time.
- Attend school-sponsored meetings, support the PTA, get involved in creating positive change for our school.
- If concerns arise, discuss them directly with your child's teacher(s) or the guidance counselor.
- In communicating with your child or his/her teachers, model a positive attitude about school, one that reflects a home and a school working together to benefit our students.
- Communicate directly with the principal if issues are not satisfactorily resolved in direct communication with teachers or the guidance counselor.

## **VISITORS**

For your information and for reasons of security, a “visitor” to HKMS is anyone who is not an officially registered student at HKMS or an employee of the Redding Public School system on the active payroll of the day. A “visitor” to HKMS must immediately report to the main office, identify himself/herself, state the reason for the visit, sign in, and receive permission from the principal/designee to be in the building.

1. Visitors are not permitted in the classroom except by permission of the classroom teacher and the building administrator.
2. All visitors are required to sign in with the office when arriving at school.
3. Students are not permitted to bring guests to school. Graduates of HKMS who wish to visit former teachers may do so only after 2:40 PM dismissal and, of course, if the teacher is available.
4. Visitors who are not authorized are loitering and may face a misdemeanor charge of trespassing.
5. Parents are requested to come to the main office when dropping off items for their child or when coming to school for a teacher meeting. We ask that our learning environment be free from interruptions which have a negative impact on our students.

## **SECTION SEVEN – MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

### **PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege, intended to complement the academic experience. Students must maintain passing grades, as well as acceptable discipline and attendance records in order to participate.

### **GIFTS TO SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

Gifts between students and/or parents/legal guardians and school personnel shall be discouraged. Teachers and school personnel do not expect gifts. Rather, they feel rewarded when students work up to their potential. At HKMS if a student or family feels compelled to present a staff member with a gift, please make it a gift of learning such as a poem or story written by the student, a picture or card drawn by the child, or a novel read by the student and shared with the teacher. Another way to honor a staff member is by giving the gift of a good deed done in the name of the person. Please respect our strong belief that the best gift a teacher can receive is the gift of a student's accomplishment.

### **PHONE CALLS/MESSAGES**

Students are not permitted to use office telephones unless it is an emergency, and then only during their lunch period. **Parents should discuss all appointments and after school arrangements with their children before they leave for school.**

The office staff is not able to interrupt classes to relay routine messages to students. Only in the event of an emergency will messages be relayed to students while they are in class. For the safety of students, the school will not allow students to change transportation plans without the permission of a parent and not after 12:00 PM.

Helen Keller Middle School does have a voice mail system which can be accessed by contacting the regular phone number 203-268-8651. The main office is staffed to take calls between 7:30 AM and 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Summer office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM until 3:00 PM.

### **PHOTOGRAPHING, AUDIOTAPING, AND VIDEOTAPING STUDENTS**

During the school year, for a variety of reasons, photographing, audiotaping, and videotaping of students and/or classrooms may occur. There may be instances where these photographs, audiotapes or videotapes are used by staff, specialists, interns, parents/legal guardians and their representatives, as well as others. The photographs, audios, and/or videos may be published or broadcast in local area newspapers, the HKMS website or the Cable TV access channel. If, for any reason, parents/legal guardians do not want their child to be photographed, audiotaped, or videotaped, the school principal should be notified, in writing, and appropriate arrangements will be made. Otherwise, the photographing, audiotaping or videotaping may occur.

### **LEARNING RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER - GENERAL INFORMATION**

The HKMS Library Media Center hours are 8:00 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. Monday through Friday for student and staff use.

Students are encouraged to visit the Library Media Center during school hours with the permission of their teachers. The circulation desk is open from 8:00 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. for checking out materials. Classes are also scheduled for research assignments throughout the year. The Library Media Center can accommodate up to two classes per schedule period. The HKMS Library Media Center is divided into distinct areas for more efficient utilization. There is an office area, a computer area with 21 computer stations, and a main seating area with space for up to 50, and shelving for 10,000 items. There is also a computer lab with seating for up to 24. For more information, please visit the HKMS website: <http://www.helenkellerps.org>.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

See HKMS website ([www.helenkellerps.org](http://www.helenkellerps.org)) for Policy #6115 regarding the Pledge of Allegiance.