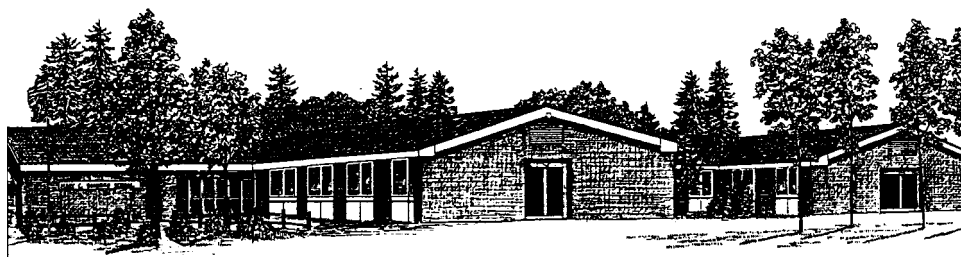


**DONDERO SCHOOL**



**STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK  
2010 - 2011**

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**The purpose of the Portsmouth Public Schools is to educate all students by challenging them to become thinking, responsible, contributing citizens who continue to learn throughout their lives.**

## **DONDERO SCHOOL COVENANT**

**We pledge to:**

- **Have a safe and respectful learning environment.**
- **Create an environment that fosters a love for learning.**
- **Take care of each other by taking responsibility for our choices and accepting responsibility for our actions.**
- **Challenge ourselves to go beyond what is expected.**
- **Work together to set and achieve goals.**
- **Teach and learn critical thinking, problem solving and fundamental skills through an integrated curriculum.**
- **Nurture all learning styles through a variety of teaching strategies.**
- **Document learning through meaningful ongoing assessments that drive teaching and learning and provide feedback to students, parents and teachers.**
- **Recognize, share and celebrate our learning and growth.**

## SCHOOL YEAR

A school calendar will be distributed at the beginning of the school year indicating the days that school is in session, all holidays and vacation periods. Additional calendars will be sent home periodically throughout the school year. A copy of the current school calendar is printed in the back of the handbook.

## SCHOOL HOURS

8:45	Students enter the building; classroom activities begin
8:55	Classes begin; students are marked tardy at this time
3:00	Dismissal

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is very important and is a significant contributing factor to success in school, both academic and social. It gives your child an appreciation of the importance of education and is a big factor in establishing a sense of responsibility and dependability.

Students are expected to attend school whenever it is in session except in the case of personal illness or family emergency. Upon returning to school, please provide a note with the dates of the student's absences and reason for absence. As described in the School Board Attendance Policy, medical and dental appointments should be scheduled after school hours whenever possible and vacations should not be scheduled when school is in session.

When a student has had:

**5 absences (unexcused or parent excused):** a note will be sent home to notify parents,  
**8 absences (unexcused or parent excused):** the school will send another note and phone home to arrange a meeting to discuss a plan to address attendance concerns,  
**10 absences (unexcused or parent excused):** the school will notify the Truant Officer for intervention and assistance.

Arriving at school on time is another important factor in a child's daily success. Morning routines and classroom meetings set the stage for what will occur throughout the day. A tardy student who is forced to play catch up begins his/her day at a disadvantage. Parents of chronically tardy students will be similarly notified and the child may have to make up work missed during recess.

Information about student attendance concerns will be shared with Portsmouth Middle School Staff each spring as part of Middle School Transition planning.

## CHILDWATCH

The School Board sponsors a Child Watch Program for all children in grades K - 5 to insure the safety of all children.

**If your child is going to be absent or late, please call the school at 436-2231 before school starts; a message may be left on the answering machine.**

If we have not heard from you and cannot reach you by telephone to verify the absence, your child's name will be given to the Portsmouth Police for follow-up.

## REGISTRATION OF NEW STUDENTS AND WITHDRAWALS

The school office must be notified of all student entrances and withdrawals so that records may be obtained or sent out. To register a new student, parents are asked to call Dondero School (436-2231) to schedule an appointment. A birth certificate, social security number, and immunization record must be shown at the school. **According to NH State law, no student may be admitted without a statement of immunizations unless exempted for medical or religious reasons.**

As per Portsmouth School Board policy, families who are seeking to enroll their children in the Portsmouth Public Schools and who are planning to move into the District must provide appropriate documentation to demonstrate legal residency. A "Certification of Residency" form must be completed.

## KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

In early spring, dates for kindergarten registration are shared via the local newspaper, our website, and through school news. Registration usually takes place during the month of May. According to School Board Policy, children must be 5 years old by September 30<sup>th</sup> to attend kindergarten.

## EMERGENCY FORMS - STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

An emergency form for every student is distributed at the beginning of each school year. It is **imperative** for the school to have the information requested for **each student**. Parents or guardians are asked to complete all the information, as it is especially critical that we have names of people we can contact should a child become sick and the parent is unavailable.

Please notify the school if, during the course of the year, any of the information supplied on the emergency form changes. We must have current phone numbers (both home and work) in case of an emergency. Should you move, please let the office know of your new address.

**It is necessary that the school records be current and accurate regarding custody in cases where parents are separated or divorced. Please provide the principal with a current copy of custody and/or other pertinent documents.**

## VISITORS

We encourage parents to visit our school. Parents are welcome to attend special assemblies, volunteer, and participate in school events. **School visitors and volunteers are asked to enter through the front entrance, sign-in at the main office and obtain a nametag. Please sign-out as well so that we can maintain an accurate count of those present in the building.** The interior foyer doors are locked during school hours. Please check in with office personnel for entrance.

All visitors and volunteers are asked to use hand sanitizer available at the front entrance and refrain from bringing open food and beverage containers into the school. This will help us foster an allergen sensitive environment.

In order to minimize classroom disruptions, walk-in observations or meetings are not permitted. Parents should contact the teacher and make an appointment in advance. Conferences cannot be held during the time a teacher is scheduled to be with the class. If parents find it necessary to deliver articles of clothing, instruments, etc. to school, please leave them in the office. Classroom instruction must not be interrupted.

## PARENT/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

We encourage a partnership between the school and home and value your input. Parents are encouraged to call teachers when they have questions, need to share information, or wish to obtain information. An Open House for parents and guardians is scheduled during the month of September. Please make every effort to attend this very important evening.

Every Wednesday an email to families will be sent informing them of upcoming school events and reminding them to check out the fliers and links posted on the Dondero PTA website. ([www.donderopta.org](http://www.donderopta.org)) For families without Internet access, a packet of notices will be sent home with the youngest child.

## BEFORE SCHOOL PROCEDURES

**Beginning at 8:45 AM, school staff will open the front doors to walkers. Bus students will enter through the doors in the back of the building.**

Students who eat breakfast at school enter the building at 8:30 and proceed directly to the cafeteria.

For their safety and comfort, children should not arrive earlier than 8:45 AM, as there is no supervision on the playground prior in the morning. Students should arrive early only if they are attending specific school-scheduled and supervised activities.

Students come directly into the school and go to their classroom. Those students eating breakfast should go to the cafeteria and eat before going to their rooms.

After the first week of school, parents are asked to say good-bye in their car or in the school's foyer.

Students are expected to be on time for school at 8:45. Those who arrive late (after 8:55 AM) must report to the office for a tardy slip before going to class. It is imperative that students are on time as missing morning meeting may negatively impact a student's day.

## AFTER SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Our playground is not supervised by school staff. The school playground is open to the public after 3:30 PM. However, the fields may be used for practice and/or games. If you choose to stay and play, please be mindful of the other activities that may be taking place.

## EARLY AND UNAVOIDABLE DISMISSAL

Students may be dismissed early by the parents' /guardians' written request indicating the dismissal time. If that is not possible, please notify the office of any changes in your child's schedule **before 1:30 PM that day.**

Students will be dismissed **only through the office.** A parent, guardian, or other authorized person must sign the child out in the office. Office staff will call your child to the office. Parents are requested to wait in the office area. No student is to leave the building unescorted during the school day.

Should your child arrive back to school the same day, please sign back in at the office so we know he/she has returned.

In the event of an unscheduled early release from school, each student will follow the plan submitted by parents/guardians that is kept on file at school.

## END OF THE DAY DISMISSAL

In order to provide for a safe and orderly dismissal, parents are asked to wait in the vestibule of the school, or outside the front doors at dismissal times. This will keep the hallways and foyer clear for students. Parents may not wait for their child at the classroom door.

Walkers are the first to be dismissed at 3:00 PM. At about 3:05 bus students will be dismissed and will load buses at the back of the building.

We request that parents plan appointments so that students remain at school until the end of the day. If you need to have your child dismissed early, please do so before 2:50. Remember, all children must be signed out by office staff.

If you need to see a teacher at the end of the day, please wait until bus students have been dismissed.

## PARENTS DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP STUDENTS

- Pick up and drop off of students is to occur only in the circle in front of the school.
- Students are to wait in front of school and not board cars until cars reach the corner of the school building near the field.
- Cars enter on Fillmore Road.
- Cars must pull forward around the cul-de-sac, single file, as far as possible before stopping.
- **Drivers must remain in cars while in the cul-de-sac.**
- Children enter and exit from the **passenger side of the car onto the sidewalk.**
- Please follow the traffic direction provided by our custodians on duty.
- Please exit via Fillmore Road and proceed onto Van Buren Road.
- For safety reasons, **use of cell phones is strongly discouraged** while in the school parking lot and cul-de-sac.

## WALKERS AND BIKERS

- Children who walk or ride bikes to school should enter and exit the school using the sidewalk on Fillmore road, crossing Van Buren at the crosswalk with the crossing guard. **They should not enter or exit on Adams Road.**
- Children may ride bikes to school when their parents consider them able to ride safely.
- Bicycles are to be parked only in the bicycle racks on the fields next to the sidewalk.
- The school accepts no responsibility for bicycles brought to school.
- There is absolutely no bicycle riding on school property when school is in session.
- Per New Hampshire State Law, helmets must be worn. A lock for the bike is recommended but not required.
- At the bike rack, scooters are to be folded (if possible) and carried in to the school.
- Scooters are to be carried to the end of the school building prior to riding.
- Please supervise your children at dismissal. Please do not permit your child to climb or sit on the split rail fence. Running and playing tag around the flagpole is not permitted.

## SHORT TERM PARKING

- Enter via Adams Avenue. Stop at the sign then turn right into short-term parking.
- **No drop off or pick-ups in this area. Please use cul-de-sac.**
- Parents who need to walk in with their children park here.
- Volunteers will park here.
- This is a **one-way** parking area with an exit on Fillmore.

## LATE START DAY SCHEDULE

On Late Start Days, children enter school two hours later than usual at 10:45 AM. The regular lunch schedule will take place and students will have a shortened unified arts class that day. Nine Late Start Days have been scheduled for professional development opportunities for staff. Additionally, there may be Late Start Days due to weather conditions.

## BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAM

All children eat lunch at school. A complete hot lunch is available. Those bringing their own lunch may purchase milk. Applications for free or reduced meals are available throughout the year in the school's main office.

A monthly menu is sent home, posted on the City of Portsmouth and Dondero PTA websites, and posted in each classroom. Parents are requested to discuss food problems or allergies with the school nurse and/or the cafeteria manager. Please see the nurse for further help should your child require a special diet.

We encourage healthy food choices and strongly recommend that lunches brought from home have nutritional value. **Please help by making sure that your child does not bring soda or candy to school.**

## BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PRICES

The School Board determines meal and milk prices. Prices will be posted on the menus in the fall.

## BREAKFAST AND LUNCH SCHEDULE

**BREAKFAST**            **8:30 - 8:50 AM**

Lunch	Grade	Recess
10:55 - 11:20	1	10:30 - 10:55
11:00 - 11:25	3	11:25 - 11:50
11:25 - 11:50	2	11:50 - 11:15
11:50 - 12:15	K	1:35 - 2:00
12:15 - 12:40	4	12:40 - 1:05
12:40 - 1:05	5	1:05 - 1:30

## EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOL

The Superintendent of Schools determines the necessity for an emergency closing or delayed opening of school due to weather conditions or other emergencies. Announcements regarding such closings are made over local radio stations: **WOKQ - 97.5 FM, WERZ 107.1 FM, WHEB 100.3 FM, WTSN 1270 AM, and 95.3 FM.** Announcements are also available on television on **Channel 9 -WMUR - TV.**

Please do not telephone the radio stations or the school. Listen to your radio for updated information.

## EMERGENCY EARLY CLOSING

In case of an emergency closing the school will attempt to contact families. Using the information provided to us on **forms distributed during the first week of school.**

Since we may be unable to contact all parents in the short period of timer brought about by emergency conditions, you should have the following family emergency plan in place:

- Give your child 3 homes in a certain order to go to in the neighborhood.
- Show them where an extra house key is kept.
- Remind them to go the designated neighbor, but then be certain to leave a note for you (on back door or in the mailbox) as to where they are staying.
- We suggest that you walk through a simulation with your children to give them the experience in a non-threatening situation.
- All children will be sent home, except those enrolled in day care programs at the school and other specific locations.

We will send all children home under most circumstances; however, should there be an instance when children can absolutely not be dismissed (e.g. electrical lines or an accident near the school), we will keep your child safely at school.

In the event that a snowstorm causes an early dismissal, please listen to the radio or TV and check Dondero PTA and City of Portsmouth websites. Please be alert and know that your child, unless he or she is enrolled in day-care, will be coming home. Please call the school office with any questions or unique circumstances.

## WEATHER RELATED DELAYED OPENING OF SCHOOL

Occasionally throughout the winter months, the Superintendent of Schools will announce a two-hour delay to the start of school. When there is a delayed opening of school, all before-school activities are canceled. School starts two hours later than the regularly scheduled time. Busses will pick up students two hours later than normal. Lunch will be served; however there will be no breakfast. Please refer to the above information to obtain up-to-date TV or radio broadcasts.

## CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS

Each classroom is unique and classroom celebrations will reflect that uniqueness. Celebrations will focus on student learning and take place at least three times during the year. Classroom teachers will contact Celebration Coordinators/Room Parents to request parental assistance in the planning and implementation of celebrations as needed.

## DISTRIBUTION OF INVITATIONS

Parents are asked **not** to send invitations to birthday parties or similar events for distribution at school unless **every** child in the class receives an invitation. Please be sensitive to a child's need to be included when scheduling parties that involve pick up at school. Please contact your child's teacher or the principal with questions.

## BIRTHDAYS

For many children at Dondero who have food allergies and dietary restrictions, food at school celebrations poses a health risk. Therefore it is our tradition that **NO edible birthday treats** be sent to school. Please avoid sending in special food completely unless requested by the teacher for a special classroom celebration. In this case the teacher will have already met with the nurse and parents of the child(ren) most affected. In order to meet the health needs of other students, we also ask that no balloons be brought in for celebrations of any kind.

Students' birthdays (or half-birthdays) will be recognized during morning announcements and at that time the birthday child(ren) will be invited to the office to receive a special 'gift' from the Principal. Additionally, each classroom will recognize the birthday child in a unique way.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

We believe that all children learn best in an environment that is safe, nurturing and consistent. Through the Responsive Classroom program and the Open Circle curriculum, we have established expectations for behavior that focus on respect, responsibility and self-control within the classroom. Our goal, as a staff, is to extend these expectations to the common spaces in the school.

At the start of the school year, the Principal will meet with each class or grade level to:

- ❑ Give students their own copy and review the School Rules that cover the common spaces - hallways, bathrooms, cafeteria, playground and buses
- ❑ Discuss the rules with them and reinforce the expectation that their good classroom behavior needs to extend to the common spaces
- ❑ Ask students to commit themselves to following the school rules by signing a "class pledge" which will be displayed on the bulletin board near the cafeteria for the entire school year
- ❑ Discuss with children that their choices may have consequences.

Additionally, an assembly will be held to discuss safe and appropriate School Bus behavior expectations with students. Bus drivers, school staff, and the principal will attend.

### **DONDERO SCHOOL RULES**

1. Keep our school safe and clean.
2. Be responsible for your own actions and words.
3. Take care of yourself and each other.
4. Respect other people's space, property and time.

The following provides descriptions of what following the School Rules looks and sounds like:

<p><b>Cafeteria:</b> Use "inside" voices Be kind with your words Keep food on your tray and in your mouth Hands and feet to yourself Raise hand for permission to get up No hats</p>	<p><b>Hallways:</b> Voices off Stay to the right Hands by your side Tight line Walking feet Eyes forward</p>	<p><b>Bus:</b> <i>Please refer to Bus Rider Agreement</i></p>
<p><b>Bathrooms:</b> Flush toilets Wash hands with soap and water Dry hands with paper towel Put paper towels in basket Act responsibly Respect other's privacy Report any problems</p>	<p><b>Playground:</b> Show respect for adults on duty Be kind with your words Hands and feet to yourself Play safely Good listening Line up quickly Use equipment the way it is meant to be used Follow rules of fair play and good sportsmanship</p>	

## INTERVENTIONS/CONSEQUENCES

Infractions of these rules are handled by a number of people. The classroom teacher or other supervising staff member will handle issues that arise on the playground, in the hallways, bathrooms, or cafeteria. This may involve consultation with the counselors and/or principal for additional support. The bus driver, in consultation with the counselors and/or principal when additional support is required, handles issues that arise on the bus.

The following is a non-inclusive list of behaviors and likely interventions:

<p><b>Level 1 Behaviors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Work refusal</li> <li>❑ Noises, out of line, classroom disruptions, not following directions, teasing, etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Intervention:</b>  <b>Teacher responsibility</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take a break</li> <li>2. Buddy classroom</li> <li>3. Incident report sent home</li> <li>4. If behavior(s) continues, teacher conference with parent/guardian</li> </ol>
<p><b>Level 2 Behaviors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Repetitive teasing (which could build a case for bully behavior)</li> <li>❑ Swearing/inappropriate language</li> <li>❑ Petty theft/stealing</li> <li>❑ Harassment (name calling, pushing, shoving, intimidation, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Intervention:</b>  <b>Teacher, staff member, counselor, and/or principal responsibility</b></p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> offense:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher conference with student</li> <li>2. Incident report sent home</li> <li>3. Disciplinary action</li> </ol> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> offense: all of the above plus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meet with school counselor(s)</li> <li>2. Phone call home by teacher or other adult involved</li> <li>3. Principal notified</li> </ol> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> offense: all of the above plus"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parent conference</li> </ol> <p>4<sup>th</sup> offense: all of the above plus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In-school or out-of-school suspension</li> </ol>
<p><b>Level 3 Behaviors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Fighting (punches thrown, biting, etc.)</li> <li>❑ Sexual harassment</li> <li>❑ Severe vandalism</li> <li>❑ Weapons (real or look-alike)</li> <li>❑ Theft/stealing</li> <li>❑ Racial harassment</li> <li>❑ Severe threats</li> </ul>	<p><b>Intervention:</b>  <b>Teacher, counselor, and/or principal responsibility</b></p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> offense:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meet with counselor(s) and/or principal</li> <li>2. Disciplinary action which may result in In/Out of school suspension</li> <li>3. Title IX investigation</li> <li>4. Report to Police or other authorities</li> </ol> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> offense:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In/Out of school suspension</li> <li>2. Any of the above interventions</li> </ol>

A Dondero School Incidence Report will be filled out when students do not follow school rules. Parents/guardians of both students (aggressor and recipient of behavior) will be notified for Level 1, 2, and 3 Behaviors.

The principal will be provided discretion to determine what intervention is most appropriate to improve student behavior and be fair to both the student and others involved. Copies of all Incident Reports are provided to the principal.

The Incident Forms DO NOT become part of your child's school record. The intent of the form is to improve communication between home and school and to track student behavior that might be considered bullying.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school with any questions.

## **PUPIL SUSPENSION**

Any student may be suspended from school by the principal for gross misconduct, or for neglect or refusal to conform to the reasonable rules of the school; and he/she shall not attend school until reinstated by the principal. Physical violence, weapons possession and bullying are grounds for immediate suspension.

## **BULLYING**

***THIS POLICY WILL BE IN EFFECT UNTIL THE NEW POLICY IS ADOPTED TO SUPPORT RSA 193-F:3)***

In accordance with the Portsmouth School Department Policy printed below, bullying is not tolerated at Dondero School.

### **Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention Policy - Bullying**

#### ***1. General Statement of Policy***

The Board is committed to providing all pupils a safe school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect. This policy is intended to comply with RSA 193-F, which specifically identifies "bullying" as a form of pupil harassment. Conduct constituting bullying will not be tolerated, and is prohibited by this policy, in accordance with RSA 193-F

#### ***2. Bullying Defined***

Bullying is repetitive conduct that subjects a pupil to insults, taunts, or challenges, conduct resulting in the exclusion of other pupils, whether verbal, non-verbal, physical in nature, including via the use of electronic methods of communication, including threats, any of which

are likely to intimidate or provoke a violent or disorderly response from the student being treated in this manner.

Depending on the severity of the conduct, a single act may be considered bullying.

### ***3. Annual Review of Policy***

This policy will be reviewed with the students on an annual basis.

### ***4. Notice and Reporting Procedures***

Any school employee, administrator, student, or employee of a company under contract with the Portsmouth School Department who has witnessed or has reliable information that a pupil has been subjected to bullying as defined herein shall report the incident to the building principal, or his/her designee. The principal shall immediately report the incident to the Superintendent of Schools. A written report must be sent to the Superintendent within a reasonable amount of time.

The principal or his/her designee shall notify the parent or legal guardian of all students involved in an incident of bullying, first by telephone and followed in writing with 48 hours of the occurrence. The notice shall include the following:

- A. The procedural steps to be taken by the school
- B. Due Process rights
- C. Right of appeal, including to the State Board of Education
- D. The Superintendent of Schools may waive the 48-hour notice requirement if it is determined that it will be in the best interests of the child. Waivers shall be granted in writing.

### ***5. Investigation***

The principal shall conduct, or cause to be conducted, an investigation into the occurrence to be completed within five (5) school days of the incident. There shall be a written decision containing the results of the investigation. If it has been determined that an incident of bullying has occurred, the principal may take any of the following actions:

- A. Referral to peer mediation
- B. Suspension from school

### ***6. Due Process***

If the student and/or his/her legal guardian disagree with the decision of the building principal, the matter may be appealed to the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent may uphold the decision of the principal, reverse, or modify the decision of the principal. Disciplinary action may be recommended in accordance with applicable School Board policy, up to and including expulsion from school. If there is a recommendation for expulsion, the matter shall be heard by the Portsmouth School Board within 10 days of the decision of the written decision of the investigation. If the student is under suspension, the hearing before the Board shall be within 10 days of the suspension from school. If the offending student and his/her parent or legal guardian disagrees with the decision of the Superintendent, the matter shall be heard by the Portsmouth School Board. The student may appeal the decision of the Board to the State Board of Education.

(Policy Approved by Portsmouth School Board: February 12, 2008)

## THE RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM APPROACH TO TEACHING

Many teachers at Dondero have received formal training in this approach to teaching, and evidence of that work can be seen all over the building. Though each teacher uses these methods in varying degrees, the following is a synopsis of some of the Responsive Classroom's major components.

Morning Meeting: This is a 15-30 minute block of time set aside for the direct teaching of both social and academic skills. Classes take time to build community through sharing, greeting each other and playing together. A daily message from the teacher to the students gets students tuned into the planned learning of the day.

Rules and Logical Consequences: The discipline system in the Responsive Classroom provides a balanced approach to discipline where students have a hand in forming the rules which guide their behavior and learn from their mistakes through logical consequences. Teachers provide firm and caring guidance without tearing down students.

Guided Discovery: This is a process that allows students and teachers to explore new materials and areas of the classroom and school together, brainstorming possibilities for use and learning opportunities and discussing proper care for materials and spaces.

Classroom Organization: Teachers take time to create a classroom environment that is developmentally appropriate, clean, attractive, and conducive to learning. It is understood that the spaces in which we work affect the way we behave.

The First Six Weeks of School: A considerable amount of time is spent in the first six weeks of the school year learning the routines and expectations of the classroom. Students and teachers must become comfortable working together and have a common understanding of how the classroom community will work before intense academic learning can take place.

Parent Communication: Just as it is important for teachers to know their students, teacher must also know the parents of their students. Effective and open communication with parents is a great asset for everyone involved, most importantly the students.

This is a very basic synopsis of just a few of the most important aspects of the Responsive Classroom approach to teaching. More information about the Responsive Classroom is available at Dondero School or at [www.responsiveclassroom.org](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org).

## LUNCHROOM EXPECTATIONS

Lunch is a time for students to eat, relax, and meet with friends. We do not expect or desire a silent cafeteria; however, certain behaviors are not acceptable. These include continual loud talking or shouting, throwing food or rough housing, and disrespecting others including Cafeteria Teachers.

**Rules for a Respectful & Enjoyable Lunch Time** are posted in the cafeteria and printed below.

- Use "Inside Voices" and kind words
- Keep food on your tray or in your mouth
- Keep hands and feet to yourself
- Raise your hand to ask for permission to get up
- Walk carefully
- When adults want your attention they will:
  - Clap the echoing rhythm, and
  - Students will:
    - Raise their hands and Show the "School Listening Look"

Consequences for not following these rules may include:

- Verbal warning.
- Moved to a separate table.
- Removal from cafeteria for the remainder of the lunch period, which may include loss of recess.
- Removal from the cafeteria and loss of lunch recess privileges for additional days.
- Conference with parent and child to determine appropriate consequence.
- A Dondero School Incidence Report may also be completed and sent home.

## BUS REGULATIONS

All students may ride a bus sometime during the year. Therefore, we need to have on file a **signed copy of the Bus Rider Agreement for each student** that is sent home in the fall or at the time of registration. The responsibility for all children riding school buses rests with the parents until the child actually boards the bus for school; the parent is also responsible once the child gets off the bus on the return trip home. A copy of the Bus Rider Rules, Bus Rider Disciplinary Policy, and Parental Concerns Resolution Process can be found on the following pages of this handbook.

Students are expected to ride home and to school on their regular bus unless the school receives a written request from the parent that the child is allowed to go elsewhere on a specific day. The office must sign these notes. Buses are limited as to the number they can carry; therefore, we request that children come and go on their assigned bus.

## RECESS POLICY

Children should be appropriately dressed to spend time outdoors during recess. Warm clothes, gloves, hats, and boots should be worn during winter months. Children well enough to come to school are considered well enough to be outside during recess. Exceptions for medical reasons may be granted on an individual basis. In the event of severely cold or inclement weather, outdoor recess will be canceled and children will have indoor recess time.

Footwear suitable for running on uneven surfaces such as the field and wood chips, and for climbing the play structure should be worn to school. Flip-flops and shoes with raised heels are not safe for this type of play.

## PLAYGROUND RULES AND PRIVILIGES

### RESPECT

- \* Show respect for the adults on duty who are there to insure safety of all students
- \* Use equipment safely and in the way it is meant to be used.
- \* Follow the rules of fair play and sportsmanship so that everyone can enjoy recess
- \* Walk quietly by classrooms in the "Quiet Zone"
- \* Avoid mud and puddles so our school can remain clean
- \* Return to school building only with permission of a staff member and a buddy
- \* Respect personal space on the playground and while lining up - keep hands and feet to yourself

### SLIDES

- 1 Slides go one way, down on your bottom
- 2 Slide down one at a time
- 3 Once at the bottom of the slide, move away quickly

### MONKEY BARS

- 1 Use is a privilege for fourth and fifth grade students
- 2 The very top of the bars is off limits
- 3 May be used only when dry

### SNOW

- 1 Snow, rocks, woodchips, and sticks stay on the ground
- 2 Respect snow sculptures made by others

### TETHERBALL

- 1 Use is a privilege for students in grades 3 - 5
- 2 The tetherball pole is not for climbing

### SWINGS

- 1 One person at a time
- 2 Sit on the swing only
- 3 Stop swing before getting off
- 4 Swing forward and back, not sideways
- 5 Only adults can push
- 6 Walk around swings so you don't get hit
- 7 Share the swings with others waiting for a turn by counting

### CLOTHING

- 1 A fifth grade privilege is that only boots are needed to play in snow
- 2 Snow pants and boots are needed to play in snow for all students in Kindergarten through grade 4
- 3 Jackets brought from home are to worn out to recess. Students will determine their use according to their activity. Students will stay outside through the entire recess.

### GAMES AND TOYS

- \* The following are not allowed: wall ball, baseballs, other hard balls, wooden and aluminum bats, lacrosse sticks
- \* Touch football only is allowed. A light touch is by two hands.

## DRESS GUIDELINES

Appropriate and acceptable dress creates an atmosphere conducive to learning. Parents are requested to use judgment in determining what is appropriate clothing for school. A general rule to follow is that clothes be neat, clean, and not extreme. Students should dress to assure a healthy and comfortable condition for the school day. The school principal will make the decision regarding the appropriateness of a student's appearance should there be a question.

- ❑ Footwear such as flip-flops and high heel platform shoes that could cause personal injury are strongly discouraged
- ❑ Sneakers with wheels are not permitted
- ❑ Tank tops with less than a 2" shoulder strap, shirts which display the midriff, and fishnet shirts are not permitted
- ❑ Clothing with inappropriate words or graphics, especially relating to drugs, alcohol and tobacco are not permitted
- ❑ Clothing that interferes with instruction or is disruptive to the class is not permitted
- ❑ All students will need sneakers for gym. Young children need smocks (old, large shirts, etc.) for a variety of art activities
- ❑ Oversized mesh sport jerseys are discouraged unless the child is wearing a t-shirt underneath
- ❑ Children not following these dress guidelines will be asked to cover up with a shirt from the nurses office

## CARE OF BOOKS

**LIBRARY** - Lost or damaged library books must be replaced at the student's expense.

**TEXTBOOKS** - Textbooks are provided for all students. It is the responsibility of the student to see that all books are treated with care. Textbooks lost or damaged must be replaced at the student's expense.

## TELEPHONE

The office phones are for official use only. Students must have teacher permission before using the phones. **The phone is not to be used by students for social calls or to make special arrangements for after school hours.** All arrangements, such as going home with someone else, should be planned ahead so that the instructional program is not interrupted and the phone line is kept open. To minimize interruptions in the classroom, please remember to send a note in to your child's teacher.

Telephone messages will be provided only in emergency situations.

## **AFTER SCHOOL**

On occasion, it may be necessary for a child to stay after school to make up work due to an absence, receive individual help from the teacher, or for disciplinary reasons, as well as to help out teachers. Children will be instructed to call home if they are going to stay after school on a particular day.

## **HOMEWORK**

To further the goal of developing and nurturing independent learners, we believe that homework is an integral part of a student's education. From the earliest grades students can begin to experience the benefits of independent learning.

At the elementary level the time spent on homework should approximately equal ten minutes per grade per night. For example, in grade 1, homework assigned should be approximately 10 minutes per night or 50 minutes per week. In grade 2, students should spend approximately 20 minutes per night or no more than 100 minutes per week. In grade 5, time spent on homework should be approximately 50 minutes per night or no more than 250 minutes per week.

There is an expectation that elementary students read or are read to every evening.

Homework assignments typically are a practice of skills learned during the school day. In addition, students may be assigned long term projects, which require planning and budgeting of time. Parent/teacher communication about homework is crucial at all grade levels. If homework assignments take longer than the estimated period of time, teachers strongly encourage parents to contact them.

## **HOMEWORK MAKE UP DUE TO ABSENCES**

We recommend that for short-term absences (1-3 days), the student obtain assignments from the teacher or a friend in the class. Work may be picked up in the office or sent home with a neighbor or sibling. For longer absences parents are advised to call the teacher. Please give the teacher 24 hours to put together this material.

Since most of today's schoolwork is "workshop-based" as opposed to "workbook-based" providing meaningful make-up work is not always possible. Your child's teacher will determine an acceptable and meaningful assignment.

## HEALTH

The goal of the school health program is to assist each student in developing a healthy lifestyle. The classroom teacher integrates health education and safety into the curriculum. The school nurse is a resource to the staff and classroom.

### IMMUNIZATIONS

New Hampshire law mandates immunizations against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus (DPT); polio; measles (Rubella); German Measles (Rubella) and Mumps; Hepatitis B (HepB); and Hemophilus Influenza Type B (HIB), (unless exempted for medical or religious reasons). **Students may not enter school without a record of immunizations.**

### ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

- All medications including cough drops are dispensed through the nurse's office.
- A "Parental Request Form for the Administration of Medication at School" obtained at the nurse's office must be completed. The form includes the student's name, the name of the medication, beginning and ending dates, dosage, time to be given, any allergies, and the diagnosis and/or reason for the medication.
- **The prescription medication must be in the original container** from the pharmacy (request a second container for the home supply). The label must include the student's name, the name of the medication, the directions for administration, the physician's name, and the date.
- **Non-prescription medication must be in the original container with the student's name and date clearly marked on the container.**
- The medication should be transported to school by the parent or guardian.
- It is important to notify the nurse of any changes in your child's health status, such as illness, medications, and allergies (food, environmental and medications).

### COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REGULATIONS REGARDING READMITTANCE TO SCHOOL

Chicken Pox - 5 days from onset of rash or until all lesions have crusted over. Other children in the family who have not had the disease may attend school. The nurse will watch for symptoms.

### ILLNESS AND ACCIDENTS

In case of emergency during the school day, the nurse is available. When she feels a child should be sent home, the parent is notified. It is **imperative** that the school has

**two emergency phone numbers.** In an emergency, if neither parent, guardian, nor person designated by parent is available, the nurse will review the situation with the principal. Parents should not hesitate to call the school if questions of physical or emotional health arise. Parents should notify the nurse if a student would be absent for an extended period of time due to illness or surgery. The nurse should also be alerted if a student receives immunizations, gets new glasses, or if there is a significant change in health status.

## ILLNESS AND AFTER-SCHOOL EVENTS

If your child is absent from school or is sent home due to not feeling well, attendance at and participation in after school events is not permitted.

### WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME

One of the most common dilemmas is when to keep children home from school. Sick children should **not** be in school for their own well being, as well as for the well being of others. Often the first sign of illness is a change in behavior, such as irritability or lethargy. A fever may or may not be present. When your child shows signs of not feeling well, he/she is best kept home from school so that you and your health care provider can further evaluate his or her condition.

Generally speaking, if your child has any of the following symptoms, he/she should be kept home:

- ❖ Vomiting      Diarrhea      Stomachache      Headache      Earache
- ❖ Sore Throat      Red, watery eyes      Drainage from eye/eyes      Persistent cough
- ❖ Fussiness      lethargy
- ❖ Severe cold symptoms such as sneezing, congestion, and/or nasal drainage, fever  
(Temperature should be normal for at least 24 hours before returning to school. Often, temperatures are lower in the morning and rise during the day.)
- ❖ Not feeling well enough to participate in school activities

When a child becomes ill at school, a parent or emergency contact is responsible for picking up the child as soon as possible. We know that for working parents, taking time from work may be difficult, but we are concerned for the well being of your child. Please notify the school office in writing, if there any changes in telephone numbers for the student information sheet.

Good hygiene habits help, such as covering mouths when coughing and sneezing and particularly, **frequent hand washing**. Please reinforce these guidelines with your child. Other recommendations are to encourage plenty of fluids (water bottles may come to school) and adequate sleep every night.

If you have any questions regarding the advisability of sending your child to school, please call your health care provider or our school nurse.

## EXAMINATIONS

A physical exam is required prior to school entrance. In addition, physical examinations are recommended every two years and more often if medically indicated. In cases where this is not possible, parents can discuss the situation with the school nurse. A health and developmental history is obtained at school entry. The nurse administers vision screening tests and hearing tests routinely to all children and by request to any child. The school nurse screens all youngsters in Grade 5 for scoliosis.

## ITEMS NOT PERMITTED IN SCHOOL

In order to insure student safety and the protection of personal property (expensive jewelry and toys, large sums of money), parents are encouraged to monitor closely those items that are brought or worn to school by students. The school cannot be responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices and therefore, it is best to avoid bringing expensive equipment to school. The following items are specifically **prohibited** from being brought to school:

- Weapons (real or toy)
- Pocketknives, razor blades, or sharp objects
- Skateboards, roller skates and roller blades
- Baseball bats, hardballs, hockey sticks, lacrosse sticks
- Matches, caps, fireworks, and paint balls

Cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are not to be used during the school day. They are to be kept in a student's backpack turned off or on silent mode. In the event of an emergency, students may use the office phone. Camera phones may not be displayed or used at any time on school grounds or during school-sponsored programs, including transportation.

IPods, mp3 players, and other such devices may be used during the bus ride to and from school but are to be kept in a student's backpack until he/she has boarded the bus.

From time to time, there is a toy that causes constant disruption in the classroom and other areas of the school. When/if this occurs, the item will be prohibited from being brought to school. Parents will be notified.

## **ANIMALS AND PETS IN SCHOOL**

Animals are not allowed in school without special permission from the classroom teacher, nurse, and principal. The Dondero playground is off limits to dogs per Portsmouth City Ordinance as posted.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Parents are requested to put their child's name on each article of outside clothing and backpack. Lost and Found articles are placed in the cafeteria or front hall and parents are welcome to examine the area for lost articles. Smaller items such as jewelry, keys, money, and glasses are kept in the school office. Many items of value often remain unclaimed and are eventually given to a charitable organization.

## **NO SMOKING POLICY**

SMOKING IS PROHIBITED AT ALL TIMES IN THE SCHOOL AND ON THE SCHOOL GROUNDS.

## **SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Parents are to be held responsible for damage to school property caused by a student who has acted in an unreasonable manner. School property includes books, supplies, furniture, building and grounds.

## **STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE**

An optional low cost accident insurance plan is offered each year. It protects the student during school hours and school travel time. Available at a higher rate is a second and more complete plan that covers the child twenty-four hours a day throughout the calendar year. Information is sent home early in the school year and forms are available in the school office.

## **PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES AND PROGRESS REPORTS**

- Parent teacher conferences are scheduled in November
- Parents may request a conference at any time throughout the year. Telephone the school office or send a note directly to the teacher to schedule your conference.

- Conferences can be of great value to the parents, the teacher, and to the child. They offer opportunities for mutual understanding and sharing information that can be gained from no other source.
- Report cards are issued three times per year in grades K -5.

## **PARENT/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

Parents are encouraged to contact their child's classroom teacher at any time during the academic year with any concerns. An early, positive relationship between the teacher and the parent is most productive in resolving issues that come up during the year. Please try to resolve the concern with the teacher before contacting the principal.

## **TITLE 1**

The Title 1 program became part of Dondero School in 2007. Title 1 teachers and paraprofessionals support student learning in Reading. All students and parents sign the Dondero School Learning Compact printed on page 39 during the first trimester.

## **STUDENT ASSESSMENT**

Ongoing assessment occurs throughout the year in all classes. In addition, the following assessments are conducted:

- The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) will be administered in all New Hampshire schools in the fall to students in Grade 3 through 8. Results will be shared with parents when they become available.
- The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) Science Test will be administered in all New Hampshire schools in the spring to students in Grade 4, 8, and 11. Results will be shared with parents when they become available.
- The Development Reading Assessment is given to all students twice a year.

## **ENGLISH SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES**

ESOL is a program for students whose native language is not English. The children receive personalized English lessons, the frequency of which depends upon the student's proficiency in English.

## FIELD TRIPS

A classroom teacher may schedule field trips out of the building during the school year. These field trips are designed to enrich the educational program. No student may go on a class trip unless his/her parent or guardian has signed a permission slip before departure. The slip will include any special conditions such as cost and lunch arrangements when appropriate.

Parents will be notified in advance if their child will not be permitted on a field trip. An alternative learning opportunity will be discussed and provided.

Transportation methods may include walking, bus, or private vehicle. The method of transportation will be clearly stated on the permission slip. In the event parents volunteer to drive, each driver **must provide the classroom teacher with an up-to-date copy of their car insurance to comply with the following:**

- \$100,000. - Bodily injury liability.
- \$300,000. - Per bodily occurrence.
- \$100,000. - Property damage.

## CURRICULUM

The curriculum at all grade levels is designed to develop physical, social, emotional, and intellectual abilities and to help children learn how to learn. Classroom teachers are sensitive to different rates of development, levels of ability, and styles of learning in planning instruction.

Children are engaged in active learning using developmentally appropriate materials. The classroom environment is structured to encourage positive interactions and meaningful learning experiences in the areas of: art, computer, health, language arts, mathematics, library, music, physical education, science and social studies. Instruction is often integrated throughout the day to support the way children learn.

Even though we are striving for a more unified, consistent approach to curriculum in classes across a grade level, there may be a reason for some specifics to vary from classroom to classroom, as teachers strive to meet the individual needs and interests of their students.

## MUSIC

Grades K - 5 have music classes weekly. In addition, students in Grade 4 and 5 participate in chorus. Chorus practice varies with our school's participation in City-Wide Concerts. Students in grades 4 receive recorder instruction as part of their

school music curriculum. Children in *Grade 5* may join the Portsmouth Elementary School Band, which meets once a week after school.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

PE is provided to children on a weekly basis. Children should wear sneakers on days when they are scheduled for gym.

### **COMPUTER**

In addition to computers in the classroom, a computer lab is available for all Dondero students. Two mobile computer labs and sub-notebook computers are available for student use in the classroom.

### **ART**

All students in the school have art once a week with the art staff in addition to art that is done in classrooms.

### **LIBRARY**

The services of the library are an essential part of the educational program at Dondero School. All classes are scheduled to use the library once a week. In addition, the library is available for independent research throughout the week. The district Library Media Specialists teach appropriate library skills to students.

## COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

Alyssa Brown [abrown2@portsmouth.k12.nh.us](mailto:abrown2@portsmouth.k12.nh.us)  
Lisa Chapman [lchapman@portsmouth.k12.nh.us](mailto:lchapman@portsmouth.k12.nh.us)

Maintaining communication between home and school is important to your child's ongoing success at school. If you have any questions regarding your child's progress or wish to discuss any concerns, the counselors are accessible by phone (436-2231), email, or by appointment. The Dondero Counseling Department provides the following services:

- ❑ **Individual counseling** that can be teacher, parent, and/or student initiated.
- ❑ **Small groups** that may focus around problem solving, friendship issues, changing families, pro-social skills instruction. Often times these groups are in the form of "lunch groups" in which a student may invite a friend or two from their grade level. Lunch groups are facilitated by one of the counselors.
- ❑ **Support and referral** at times of emotional and/or behavioral crisis.
- ❑ Close working relationship and coordination of services with community agencies.
- ❑ Consultation with colleagues and families
- ❑ Co-facilitate the Open Circle curriculum when applicable.
- ❑ Coordination and support of the annual "Personal Body Safety" presentations offered by SASS educators.

## OPEN CIRCLE SOCIAL CURRICULUM

Dondero classroom teachers, counselors, and specialists are trained to teach the Open Circle social curriculum. The Open Circle curriculum is a comprehensive, grade-differentiated social and emotional learning program for grades K-5 children. Lessons are taught twice a week for approximately 15 minutes each. "The explicit instruction and practice in various social competency skills provided in this curriculum help students and teachers to build more positive relationships and raise their expectations of themselves and others. Together, they can create a supportive and nurturing classroom environment, one that appreciates diversity of all types and encourages and supports the academic achievement of all" (*Open Circle, 2006*).

## SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Children diagnosed by the Student Evaluation Placement Team as having an educational disability will receive services according to the plan developed by the team with the parent. Parents of new students with special educational needs should inform the principal upon transferring to the school.

## SPEECH

A speech and language therapist is at the school full time to provide services to those students with needs in the area of speech and language.

## SCHOOL HEALTH OFFICE

The school nurse is available daily. She will consult with parents, teachers and students regarding health-related matters, and provide materials and information to teachers regarding the health education curriculum. She teaches a unit in 5th grade to students on human growth and development. Parents are welcome to review any materials used in this program or to call school to have questions answered.

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Dondero School seeks to provide students with a well-rounded education that includes several extra-curricular activities. Cultural arts activities include all-school assemblies, residencies, speakers, as well as grade-level events. These activities are designed to increase student awareness of their world and to develop skills essential to social and academic development. All students will be able to participate in activities scheduled by the school and sponsored either by the PTA or the school itself.

**If your child was absent from school or is sent home due to not feeling well, attendance at and participation in after school events is not permitted.**

- ❑ Two eight-week sessions of **After School Enrichment Program** classes are held during the school year.
- ❑ Students also have the opportunity to participate in **Student Leadership Team**. The purpose of the team is to provide students with an opportunity to develop leadership skills and to help create a positive school community. The team also developed ideas for projects that reach out to children and families in our larger community. The team consists of 4th and 5th graders. The team sets meeting times.
- ❑ Dondero students also participate in **Destination Imagination**. Teams of up to seven students choose topical challenges, which must be totally team-solved, without any outside help. The challenges utilize a variety of components including various technologies, theatre, arts, engineering, improvisation and presentation skills. Teams present their solutions at local, state, and national tournaments and are scored on their ability to use innovation, creativity and teamwork in solving their challenge. Information about Destination Imagination Teams is sent home in October.

- ❑ **Music:** Lessons for band instruments are available for students in grade 5.
- ❑ All fifth graders are encouraged to participate in **fall soccer** and/or **basketball** in the winter months. Dondero teams play students from other Seacoast area schools.
- ❑ Students in fourth and fifth grade are welcome to participate in **spring track**.
- ❑ **Intramural basketball** is offered to fourth grade boys and girls during the months of January and February. There are co-ed teams who are coached by parents. Games are scheduled for Thursday nights and are held at Dondero.
- ❑ **Third grade students** are invited to participate in the **Amigo** program. Students are paired with student volunteers from Portsmouth High School for weekly-supervised meetings.
- ❑ **Walking Club** is organized for all students one morning a week. A parent must accompany younger students.
- ❑ **Chess Club** is organized for students who are interested in learning the game and/or improving their skill level. Dondero students participate in the Seacoast Challenge Cup Chess Tournament each spring.

### DONDERO PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

The Dondero PTA is a non-profit association open to parents of children attending our school, teachers, staff members, administration, and interested community members. A membership drive is held every fall, but new members may join at any time. Membership ensures the right to vote on budgetary and other issues. Any parent unable to pay the membership fee who wants to join the PTA should speak with the principal.

The PTA encourages all parents to join and take part in its activities. Its aim is to support the school and coordinate efforts of parents and teachers so that a closer relationship between home and school is established, thus promoting the welfare of the children.

Throughout the year, the PTA conducts evening programs featuring speakers and panel discussions for parents. It keeps parents informed of school activities. Each year it sponsors a variety of social events. Fundraising supports a great variety of programs, materials and equipment for the school.

PTA meetings are held monthly. Dates and times are published in the school newsletter. All parents are welcome and childcare is available.

The Dondero PTA website ([www.donderopta.org](http://www.donderopta.org)) provides links to important school and community events. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in the Dondero Superhighway in order to receive weekly reminders and updates.

## DONDERO SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

We appreciate it when parents and community members volunteer in our school. School volunteers play an important role in the daily school program. Volunteers help enrich the school's curriculum, assist teachers, and expand the opportunities available to our children. Volunteers at Dondero help at school and at home. We are very fortunate to have many active and dedicated volunteers.

Please take time to complete the volunteer forms you receive. Call the school volunteer coordinators if you have questions or ideas about how you can help enrich our school. **We require that when volunteering in the school you wear a nametag so you will be recognized as a volunteer.** All volunteers are requested to sign the volunteer register in the foyer each time they help at school or at home.

### PARENT AND CHILD EXPECTATIONS AT AFTER-SCHOOL EVENTS

Dondero is fortunate to have events throughout the school year that help strengthen our sense of community. Many events occur after school hours. For the safety of students and their siblings, parents are expected to supervise their children during these events. While meeting and socializing is part of what makes school events successful it is important that children are safe at all times. Parent cooperation will help make these events enjoyable for all, especially school staff who are invited and encouraged to attend these events. Parents are asked to familiarize themselves with school and playground rules found in this student/parent handbook.

Some expectations for after-school events and gatherings:

- No running in the halls or foyer.
- No food or beverages in the halls or foyer.
- Classrooms and offices are off limits.
- A parent or a designated adult must supervise his/her children at all times including on the playground.
- All playground rules apply.
- All traffic and parking rules apply.
- Respect others.
- Respect school grounds and building.
- An adult must accompany children at all times - children should not be dropped off.
- Event volunteers are requested to make arrangements with another adult to supervise their children.
- Hand sanitizer (Purell) should be used when entering the building and when leaving the cafeteria to make the building and playground safe for children with food and environmental allergies.

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/guardians are requested to call the school office if there are any changes in the following:

1. Address
2. Telephone number (home, cell, work)
3. Email address
4. Names: child's or parent's
5. Place of work
6. Custody
7. Moving out of school district
8. Dismissal Procedures
9. Absence including illness and extended absences
10. Conference appointments

## Students

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### ATTENDANCE

A core value of the Portsmouth School Department is the importance of regular attendance at school. This value is consistent with the State of New Hampshire statutes and laws that are intended to insure a student's attendance. Lack of regular attendance and school truancy increases the risk of poor academic progress and performance, delinquent behavior, school avoidance and poor self-esteem. Tardiness to class and frequent absences from school causes a disruption to the teaching and learning process and is a distraction to both teachers and students. The Portsmouth School Department staff and administration are committed to working collaboratively with parents and students with issues associated with attendance.

Parents and legal guardians are expected to become familiar with the School Department policies and procedures for attendance and truancy that will be disseminated through the use of school newsletters, correspondence and agenda books.

It is expected that parents and legal guardians will not schedule vacations when school is in session. It is also expected that medical and dental appointments, whenever possible, will not be scheduled during the school day.

The building principals or his/her designee are responsible for truancy and attendance issues.

### Procedures

The administrative staff shall be responsible for the development and dissemination of attendance procedures stating that continued truancy of student in Portsmouth schools, is an issue that presents a formidable barrier to student learning and success. Attendance procedures shall include the following:

- **Opportunities for educators, parents and students to collaborate to improve school attendance** including guidance counselors serving as a resource, directing families to community resources, and providing written materials on the importance of regular school attendance.
- **Interventions**, which may include the following: telephone calls to the parent or legal guardian, home visits by the administration with the family, in school meetings with the administration, parents/legal guardian or student, referrals to the School Resource Officers, meetings with the Superintendent of Schools and court intervention through juvenile court truancy petitions.
- **Consequences** for unexcused absences, tardiness to school or classes, dismissals, and skipping classes. Consequences may include the loss of recess, in-school detentions, after school detentions, Saturday school, the loss of credit for classes during the quarter and also as listed in the student conduct policy.
- **Early dismissals** provided that the parent or legal guardian has written an excuse.
- **Frequent absences, dismissals, and tardiness to school due to illness** will require a signed excuse from a doctor.

## Definitions

**A half-day of absence** is when a student has missed three hours of the school day.

**At the high School**, a student who has missed more than 15 minutes of any block will be considered absent for that block. If the student has missed two blocks they will be recorded absent for a half-day of school.

**Early Dismissals** are the release of a student for part of the school day and are permissible when requested in writing, by a parent or legal guardian, for a reason that would constitute an excused absence.

**Excused absences** are permissible when the principal or his/her designee has authorized the student's non-attendance due to the following:

A parent or legal/guardian has notified the school by telephone or in writing that the student is ill. If a medical visit has occurred, please provide a note from the medical practitioner.

Death in family documented in writing by the parent/guardian.

School sponsored activities.

College visits with written documentation from the college.

Court appearances with written documentation

Religious observances documented in writing by the parent/guardian.

Significant extenuating circumstances

Anticipated absences from school should have prior approval of the building Principal. All requests should be made in writing to the principal in advance of the absence.

**Tardiness** is the late arrival of a student to school or class. By level, a student will be considered tardy at the:

Elementary level after the official start of school

Middle School after 7:40 a.m.

High School after 7:30 a.m. or after the bell has rung to begin each block

PASS after 7:30 a.m.

**The district Truant Officer** is a police officer assigned by the police department to deal with the issues concerning excessive and unexcused absences from school.

**Unexcused absence** is one that is not excused by the principal or his/her designee.

**Half Day of Attendance** is recorded when a student attends three hours of the regular length of the school day.

# Dondero School Learning Compact

“The purpose of the Portsmouth Schools is to educate all students by challenging them to become thinking, responsible, contributing citizens who continue to learn throughout their lives.”

*Portsmouth School Department Mission Statement*

## I want to learn. As a Student I will...

- take care of myself, others and the classroom.
- treat others the way I want to be treated.
- practice reading at home every day.
- let my teacher and family know if I need help.
- participate in class and complete my work each day.

## I want my child to learn. As a Parent/Guardian I will...

- communicate with the classroom teacher through conferences, phone calls and email regarding my child's progress.
- work together with my child and Dondero School to support my child's learning experience.
- create a positive home learning environment by reading, writing and talking with my child.
- monitor my child's screen time (television, computer, video games).
- see that my child attends school regularly and arrives on time.

## I want my students to achieve. As a Teacher I will...

- communicate regularly with families regarding their child's progress, through conferences, phone calls and email.
- provide a safe and respectful learning environment.
- provide high quality instruction that meets the individual needs of the students.
- be a positive role model for my students and their families.
- hold high expectations for all my students and encourage their love of learning.