



# Pinewood Intermediate School

P A R E N T H A N D B O O K

# 2021-2022



2021-2022

# Pinewood Intermediate School Parent Handbook

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This guidebook has been developed to give parents and students useful information that will help everyone navigate grades 3-5 with confidence and greater success. You'll find an overview of our program on the following pages.

Hang on to this guide and you'll probably find yourself coming back to it when questions or problems arise. If we left something out that would be useful for parents or students to know, please tell us so that we can include it in future handbooks. You can call the Communications Office at (518) 356-8250 or send an email to [communications@mohonasen.org](mailto:communications@mohonasen.org). Please also keep in mind that the information contained in this guide is subject to change.

Produced by the Mohonasen Central School District in cooperation with the Capital Region BOCES Communications Service. 8/2021

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# Contact Information

## Pinewood Intermediate School Contacts

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### Principal

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### School Psychologist

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(518) 356-8430

### School Social Worker

Liz Haynesworth  
(518) 356-8430

### Main Office Secretarial Staff

Ronni Edwards  
Diana Jones

### School Library

Sarah Kransler  
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### School Nurse

Ruth Borra  
Sarah Kinne (HOA)  
(518) 356-8440

### School Counselor

Amy Stannard  
(518) 356-8430

### Speech Therapist

Anthony Amitrano  
Michelle Fraser  
(518) 356-8430

### Administrative Aide

Megan Thompson

### Security Monitor

John Cook

### Grade 3

Marisa Caprara  
Marsha Elliott  
Diane Krawiecki  
Debra Kuebler  
Tammy Pangman  
Kathy Shafer  
Julie Varley

### Grade 4

Christine Altomer  
Marie Furlong  
Michelle Howard  
Elizabeth MacMaster  
Tami McCabe  
Lauren Neale  
Marina Strang  
Michelle Tracy-Evans

### Grade 5

Bryttni Doak  
Amanda Gavin  
Rebecca Pollick  
Lisa Smith  
Amie Tannuzzo  
Carrie Townsend  
Cristina Wheeler  
Tara Wolfanger

### Art

Bianca Bojarczuk

### Computer Lab

Liesha Sherman  
Mary Favre

### Academic Skills

Kerry Vumbaco

### Developmental Skills

Christine Cipriano

### Music

Nancy Felberbaum  
Kim Hitchcock  
Stephanie Rosselli

### Physical Education

Kathleen Murnane  
Lindsay Steenland  
Marc Vachon

### Remedial Math

Josh Hughes  
Karleen Kelts  
Kristen Taylor

### Remedial Reading

Amy Chevalier  
Brianna Coughlin  
Heidi DePiero  
Kaitlin Gaug  
Sarah Kaiser

### Remedial Writing

Lorena Hurst

### Science Lab

Liesha Sherman  
Mary Favre

### Special Education

Kasey Califano  
Katherine Daggett  
Emily Felter  
Emily Gibson

## District Contacts

### Superintendent of Schools

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[sshine@mohonasen.org](mailto:sshine@mohonasen.org)

### Assistant Superintendent for Business

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### Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

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### Information Technology Director

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(518) 356-8341

### Academic Administrator for Science & Technology

Matthew Hubbell  
(518) 356-8254

### Academic Administrator for APPR, Data, State Reporting, Mentoring, Instructional Leaders

Deborah Kavanaugh-Farnan  
(518) 356-8200

### Academic Administrator for Humanities

Katie Lossi  
(518) 356-8200

### Aquatics Program Supervisor

Kate Streeter  
(518) 356-8270

### Business Office Supervisor/District Treasurer

Tracey Freemantle  
(518) 356-8230

### Head Mechanic

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(518) 356-8263

### Continuing Education

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### Communications Coordinator

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### Director of Facilities

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### Director of PE, Athletics & Health Education

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### Food Service Program Supervisor

Kimberly Gagnon  
(518) 356-8225

### Transportation Department Supervisor

Randy Jerreld  
(518) 356-8260



## This & That

### Academic Intervention Services (AIS)

AIS services are provided to students who require support in the areas of English language arts (ELA) and math. School districts are required to provide AIS for students who have not reached a certain benchmark on the state assessments. However, the level and frequency of services is determined by the needs of each student.

Additionally, through Pinewood instructional programs there are different layers of intervention services designed to support students. These services may be “push in” during class time or “pull out.” There are reading and math specialists professionally trained to provide these services to students.

After-school academic support sessions are also held for qualifying students.

### Access to the Building After the School Day

All students are encouraged to take the time during the school day to ensure they have packed all personal belongings and instructional materials required for the evening and the following school day. In the event that a student must return to school to obtain instructional materials necessary for the following school day, the main doors will be open until 3:45 p.m. Families who need assistance in obtaining needed materials from classrooms from 3:45 to 6 p.m. may contact a member of our custodial staff at **(518) 376-1659**. **For the safety of the student and to maintain building security, students must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to re-enter the building after 2:50 p.m.**

### After-School Activities

Depending on interest and budgetary factors, Pinewood offers a variety of extracurricular activities each school year including:

- Band
- Orchestra
- Choir
- Student Council
- Chess Club
- Math Olympiad
- Art Club
- Color Guard
- Stem Enrichment
- Intramurals (morning)

## Arrival/Dismissal Times

### Arrival

School begins at 8:20 a.m. each morning. Students who arrive after 8:40 a.m. will be considered legally tardy and must be signed in by a parent/guardian and have a note.

Please note that we now have an automatic attendance system that will contact you if your child is absent from school.

Students enter the building through the main entrance. **For safety reasons, parents may not drop off their children prior to 8:05 a.m. as there is no supervision for them.**

Parents are encouraged to get their child off to a good start each school day and make every effort to have him/her to school on time.

### Dismissal

Students will board the buses as they arrive, which should be by 2:50 p.m. Please be aware that due to safety concerns, we can no longer make changes to usual busing arrangements except for emergencies which will require building principal approval. Any parent who wishes to pick up their child must sign him/her out at the security desk prior to 2:30 p.m. After 2:30 p.m., all student pickups will be done at the Grade 3 entrance after the students have been dismissed from the hallway. Photo identification is required. Please remain in your car and students will come directly to you. Any parent who needs to pick up their child during the school day must send in a note that morning.

## Assessment/Testing

Teachers continually assess student performance. Assessment methods may include observations, conferences between student and teacher, a review of a student's written work and/or a variety of other informal and formal assessments, including STAR360 universal screening, which will be given each semester.

Students in grades 3-5 take an annual state assessment in math and English language arts. Students in grade 4 also take a science assessment. Please check the district website for testing dates.

## Birthday Celebrations

Students typically enjoy celebrating their birthday with classmates. There are various means to do this and teachers have discretion on how a student's birthday will be acknowledged in the classroom. In general, large parties and/or handing out gift bags of any kind is not permitted.

Due to possible student allergies, parents should coordinate with their child's teacher about how to best acknowledge their child's birthday. Parents can ask the teacher about bringing in a special snack. Snacks should be individually portioned. If the teacher agrees, he/she will provide guidance on when to bring in the snack and when it will be distributed in the classroom. Birthday items can be dropped off at the Main Office. Healthy snacks are strongly encouraged (fruit, cheese & crackers, pretzels, dried fruit, etc.).

Sufficient snacks should be provided for all students in the class.



To be sensitive to those who may not be invited to the party, invitations to birthday parties outside of school can not be distributed in the classroom, unless the entire class is invited.

Through specific communication with the classroom teacher, parents in some classrooms may agree to share their home mailing address. Parents should ask their child's teacher if he/she can provide this mailing list in order to mail invitations to individual students. In addition, our PTO will typically provide a contact list for all families who have indicated their approval to have their contact information listed.

A unique way to celebrate is to donate a book to the Pinewood Library. Please check with the librarian about titles that are needed.

## Character Education

Pinewood's Character Education Program focuses on promoting a school community of respect, responsibility, and positive citizenship. This falls under the umbrella of being "Pinewood Proud." Each month, the Character Counts Committee focuses on a specific theme (examples include: respect, responsibility, kindness, honesty, good sportsmanship, etc.), which teachers are encouraged to integrate in their planning across curriculum areas. Students are encouraged to create projects that represent each month's trait. These projects are displayed throughout the school to promote a shared understanding and language among Pinewood students.

Students are nominated each month who have displayed exceptional behavior that is symbolic of the theme for that month. These students receive a certificate and t-shirt. They also have their picture taken and displayed on the Pinewood webpage, Character Counts bulletin board, and Pinewood lobby monitor. The Character Counts committee holds a design contest each year. Students are asked to illustrate what character means to them. The winning graphic is used on t-shirts that are distributed each month for that school year. At various times during the school year, a reception is held to recognize the recipients of the character awards and their parents.

## Conference Dates/Report Card Dates

Parent Conferences are an important time for parents and teachers to work together by sharing information, discussing student expectations and setting goals that will help the child grow as a learner and succeed in school. All parents are encouraged to schedule a fall conference with their child's teacher.

Students will be dismissed at 11:30 a.m. on the day of the conferences to allow for afternoon meeting times with parents. Parents can sign up for conferences at open house each September. Parents may schedule an additional conference at any time with their child's teacher.

Report cards for students in grades 1-5 are distributed three times a year. These dates can be found in the district calendar.

## Dignity for All Students

New York State's Dignity for All Students Act (The Dignity Act) took effect on July 1, 2012. Just as with the district's Code of Conduct, the new law seeks to provide the State's public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function. The Dignity Act includes, but is not limited to, acts of discrimination and harassment based



on a student's race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.

School officials understand the impact bullying and harassment can have on a school environment. More than a physical threat, bullying creates a climate of fear and makes learning difficult for all students. The new law calls for each school to appoint a Dignity Act Coordinator who is trained to address issues in areas protected by the law and is accessible to the school community. The Dignity Act Coordinators at Mohonasen are the principals of each school.

## District code of conduct

In compliance with the state's Safe Schools Against Violence (SAVE) legislation and the Dignity for All Students Act, the Mohonasen Board of Education has adopted a Code of Conduct (i.e., rules and regulations) for all people on school property.

Mohonasen's Code of Conduct sets high standards for student conduct and academic integrity. The Code of Conduct outlines clear consequences for students who break the rules. It specifically addresses consequences for infractions such as bullying, intimidation, harassment, swearing and cheating. The Code of Conduct also outlines the student Dress Code and Electronics Policy, as well as what is expected of students involved in extracurricular activities. This complete Code of Conduct is available online at [www.mohonasen.org](http://www.mohonasen.org) or in the Pinewood main office.

The Code of Conduct serves as a standard for consistency and fairness that protects students' rights while promoting responsibility.

Parents play an important role in the maintenance of good discipline in Mohonasen schools. Parents are encouraged to review the Code of Conduct and discuss it with their children on a regular basis.

## Dress Code

Students should wear clothing and footwear that facilitates an environment that is conducive to learning, is not disruptive and is safe. Here are some brief guidelines to assist parents in selecting clothing that will help to maintain these expectations:

**Students are expected to wear footwear that keeps them safe at all times.** This becomes extremely important for any physical activity that students participate in such as physical education, recess, etc. Students are asked not to wear flip-flops, high heels or open-toe shoes. Sneakers are one of the better examples of footwear that is safe in almost any situation. If footwear is considered unsafe, the student will be asked to sit out of activities to ensure his or her own safety.

**Students are expected to wear clothing that covers all undergarments, is not see-through, and covers areas of the body that when exposed are distracting.** Please ensure that your child refrains from wearing:

- Garments (tank tops/dresses) with halter tops, one-shoulder/off-the-shoulder shirts, strapless clothing, etc.
- Shirts that do not cover the waist and meet the top of pants/shorts.
- Shorts that are too brief or revealing. No article of clothing should be worn that reveals undergarments.



If a student is deemed to be wearing clothing that is not in compliance with established expectations or creates a disruption, the parents of that student will be contacted and informed of the concern. The parents will be given the option of bringing clothing to school for their child to change or having the child wear one of the items of clothing provided by the school. There may be disciplinary consequences.

## Electronic Devices and Trading Cards

All electronic devices and trading games, cell phones, iPods, MP3 players, DS devices, collectable cards (e.g. Pokemon, Bakugan, YuGiOh), etc., are not permitted in school. These valuable items often create a significant distraction (disputes over ownership or loss) and are not necessary in school.

### Cell Phones

Students are not allowed to use cellphones in school. If a student brings a cell phone into the building, it must be turned off and in his or her backpack for the entire school day.

- If a student is using a phone in school, he or she will receive a warning for the first offense and will be told to turn it off and put it away in a backpack.
- A second offense will result in a teacher/staff member taking the phone and returning it to the student at the end of the day.
- If a third offense occurs, the phone will be sent to the office for a parent/guardian to pick up.

## School-Sponsored/Sanctioned Events

Administration reserves the right to deny attendance at any school function based upon reasonable behavioral/safety or academic concerns. This includes but is not limited to functions such as field trips, dances, and extracurricular activities.

## Family Fund

In recent years, Pinewood families and the wider school community have been increasingly affected by a number of personal tragedies, including house fires, deaths, significant illnesses and more. The Pinewood Family Fund was developed with the intent of supporting families during these times of crisis. The goal of the fund is to provide families with a monetary donation to lessen the financial strain they may be experiencing as a result of their tragedy. Referrals are submitted by teachers and administrators, and are reviewed by a committee. Money for the fund is raised through structured fundraising activities that are facilitated by a committee made up of the principal, school social worker and several classroom teachers. Parents are also welcome to assist in the fundraising events. For further information, please contact the school social worker.

## Intramurals

Intramurals are offered by the physical education department before school to all students in grades 3-5. Two sessions are held, one in the fall and one in the spring. Details are typically sent out by the physical education department each fall.

## Lunch Guests

The Pinewood cafeteria is a place for students to learn and practice socialization skills as well as skills required for eating in public.

Parent lunchroom guests are welcome to sign in with the monitor and join their children for lunch, beginning in October. This provides time for students to acclimate and learn lunchroom expectations and routines. Guests are asked to limit their visits to no more than once per month – capacity is limited. Please note that due to COVID-19, this may be suspended if needed. Further guidance will be provided in the Fall.

Guests are asked to send in a note to the teacher the morning of their lunch visit, arranging to purchase school lunch (hot lunch, PBJ, yogurt, bagel) OR to bring a simple bagged lunch. **(Fast food is not permitted.)**

Guests should not share food with or lend money to a child other than their own due to safety and allergy concerns.

## “Next to New” Closet

In today’s financial climate, many families are experiencing difficulty managing costs associated with purchasing school supplies and clothing for their children. This demand, coupled with the general challenges of parenting, can cause a great strain. Pinewood’s “Next to New” Closet houses donated (used and possibly new) clothing items and school supplies for students in need. For further information, please contact the school social worker.

Programs operated by the district are often funded through an initiative known as **MohonCARES** (Connecting Area Resources to Empower Students) The district has been strengthening programs to help serve students both inside and outside the classroom. Across the district, students in K-12 are provided food, clothing and toiletries.

**MohonCARES** exists at different levels in each school building. These programs largely exist because of donations from our families, our community and district employees. Visit the [mohonasen.org](http://mohonasen.org) homepage and click on the MohonCARES icon to make a donation.

## Outside Recess

Weather permitting (temperatures), students will go outdoors daily for recess throughout the school year. As the weather becomes colder, parents should send their child to school with warm clothing (winter coat, hat, gloves, boots, etc.). Students who do not come to school with appropriate clothing will be asked to remain in the cafeteria during recess.

## Pinewood Pals

Pinewood Pals pairs students with adult mentors within the school building in an effort to foster supportive relationships that focus on enhancing students’ academic and social progress. Interactions may include, but are not limited to, morning check-ins, special lunch, conversations with the student’s teacher regarding academic progress, etc. Each Pal creates a unique experience designed to connect with the child. A Pal can be a teacher, administrator, counselor and/or support staff member. Students are referred to the program by their classroom teacher.

## Student Council

Pinewood’s Student Council consists of students in grades four and five. Representatives are elected by their classmates. Meetings are held after school once a month.



## SchoolMessenger

The district utilizes a communications system known as SchoolMessenger to provide parents with important announcements and timely emails, text messages and phone calls. There are alerts for general district news, weather-related closings, School Board news, Continuing Education, athletics and more.

Parents will be automatically connected to SchoolMessenger through SchoolTool, which is the district's student information management system and Parent Portal. Please take a moment to make sure your contact information is up-to-date in SchoolTool, as this will be vital to you receiving important messages through School Messenger. **If you have not been receiving these messages, please call with your updated contact information at (518) 356-8430.**

## Homework Guidelines

Mohonasen Central School District leaders believe that homework plays a critical role in teaching and learning. It also provides an excellent opportunity for parents to become aware of their child's daily academic experiences.

The purpose of homework is to strengthen academic skills and reinforce concepts taught by teachers. Appropriately assigned homework not only improves student achievement, it also develops time-management skills, self-discipline, independence, personal responsibility, and the ability to follow directions and prioritize.

### Amount of homework

To promote consistency and fairness, students generally have about 10 minutes of homework per subject a night. However, this is just a general guideline and teachers vary in their beliefs and system for assigning work.

Reading for pleasure in itself is an extremely important pastime that can have a great impact on a student's success. The research is clear that students who read regularly are more successful in school. It is important for teachers and parents to continually encourage students to read a book of their own choosing for at least 20 minutes per day.

### Homework Requests

In the event that a student is absent from school, all homework requests should be made to the main office (518-356-8430) by 8:30 a.m. Student work will be available for pickup outside the security monitor's window by 2 p.m. that day.

### Students Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each student to record his/her homework assignments in their student agenda book that is provided at the beginning of the school year. Students are encouraged to seek clarification about homework assignments they feel are unclear. It is each student's responsibility to complete homework and return it at the time it is due. Students at all levels who are experiencing difficulty with their homework are encouraged to seek help from their teachers.

It is incumbent on parents in the early grades, and students themselves as they mature, to access and complete homework assignments missed based on absences. Students who are ill may take it upon themselves to complete homework while staying home, depending upon the illness.

### Parent's Role and Responsibilities

It is the parent's role to reinforce the importance of homework and to encourage his or her child to finish homework in a timely manner. Parents are encouraged to set rules regarding homework. Research shows that when parents set clear rules defining where, when and under what conditions their child needs to complete his or her homework, the task becomes more routine and less cumbersome — and the child is more likely to be successful.

Parents should provide guidance for their child, but not provide answers or do the homework for him/her.



A recommendation is for parents to set a time limit for homework (10 min per grade) and note where a student ended versus forcing completion.

Parents are also encouraged to learn the procedures and requirements that are set by their child's teacher regarding student absences.

### **Homework Tips for Parents**

- Express to your child the importance of a good education and the value of doing homework.
- Make sure your child has a quiet, well-lit place to do homework. Make this location a permanent one.
- Watch your child for signs of frustration. If your child becomes frustrated, suggest a short break and then return to the task.
- If your child is struggling to complete an assignment, you may need to contact your child's teacher.
- At various times during the school year, positively reinforce how well your child is doing.
- Please attend the open house to find out specific policies for your child's classroom.

# Student Support Services

## Mission Statement

“Our purpose is to work with the school community to promote the development of independent, resilient, successful students empowered to explore and achieve their academic, social and emotional potential.”

## School Counselor

The elementary school counselor teams with parents, teachers, support staff, administrators and community members to give students every possible opportunity for success. The school counselor's role is broad and includes various methods such as preventive school-wide programs; classroom guidance lessons; crisis intervention; and small-group and individual student sessions. The school counselor assists in the social, emotional and academic development of students, while focusing on the future through goal-setting and career awareness.

## School Social Worker

The school social worker collaborates with teachers, administrators, students and families, and interfaces with community-based providers to respond to and support students' social-emotional and behavioral needs. Social work at school is purposefully short-term. Through individual and small-group counseling, referrals to outside agencies, individualized programs and crisis intervention, the school social worker addresses the needs of students to promote their social-emotional progress. The social worker is also responsible for providing social-work services to students who have counseling on their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

## School Psychologist

The school psychologist collaborates with parents, teachers, support staff, administrators and community members to support the needs of students. The school psychologist works with students who require specific academic/behavioral support and provides psychological testing when appropriate. The school psychologist also responds to questions regarding student evaluation and testing, behavior plans, the Student Success Team and the Committee for Special Education (CSE) process.

## Children & Grieving

Some things in life are especially hard to deal with — and hard to talk about — for adults as well as for children. It seems that the hardest ones involve loss. While most of the time, going away is followed by coming back, there are times when it's not. When a loss is permanent, children can have a lot of anger and sadness about a person or a beloved pet being taken away from them. Parents needing assistance talking to their child(ren) about death should contact the school social worker or school counselor or visit [www.mohonasen.org](http://www.mohonasen.org) for resources.

## Student Success Team

The Student Success Team is a team of teachers, administrators, parents, the school psychologist, the guidance counselor and social worker, who are all trained in collaborative problem-solving and team development. This team can help teachers and parents develop strategies to support the



success of all students. The team focuses on academic, social and emotional issues that children may be experiencing and helps put in place steps to provide additional support/interventions.

## Study Buddy Program

The Pinewood-Draper Study Buddy Program pairs Pinewood students with middle school peer tutors to assist with organization and homework completion. The program meets once a week after school hours in the Pinewood cafetorium. It is coordinated by the school social worker.

## Portrait of a Mohonasen Graduate

- Growth Oriented and Knowledgeable: Persistent in effort; embracing of challenges, maximizing potential; exhibiting a Growth Mindset
- Intellectually Curious and Creative: Driven to learn and understand the complexities and connections among cultures, people groups, facts and ideas.
- Financially Literate: Demonstrating fiscal awareness and discernment in all areas of money management including budgeting, saving, borrowing, investing, and credit.
- Team Players & Responsible Citizens: Exhibiting selfless behavior; service oriented; multiculturally fluent; champions for equity; active contributors to local, state, national and global communities.
- Effective Communicators: Active and empathetic listeners demonstrating clear, concise, confident and courteous written and oral communication skills.
- Dynamic Problem Solvers & Critical Thinkers: Demonstrating effective, logical thinking to appropriately analyze and interpret data and situations as part of collaborative problem solving.

## MohonCARES

Programs operated by the district that support children and families in need are often funded through an initiative known as **MohonCARES** (Connecting Area Resources to Empower Students) This program helps serve students both inside and outside the classroom. Across the district, students in K-12 are provided food, clothing and toiletries.

**MohonCARES** exists at different levels in each school building. These programs largely exist because of donations from our families, our community and district employees. Visit the [mohonasen.org](http://mohonasen.org) homepage and click on the MohonCARES icon to make a donation.



# Special Certificate Programs at Pinewood

## Service Learning

Students at Pinewood are encouraged to give back to their community. At Pinewood, we offer opportunities for students to engage in community service at school and we encourage students to engage in community service with their families as well. Students can submit a form with the number of hours they complete signed by a parent and we will track those hours during their time at Pinewood. Students who complete 12 hours of community service by the end of 5th grade are recognized at the 5th grade Moving Up ceremony for the generosity of donating their time and talents to our community.

## STEM Recognition

Pinewood students are provided with many opportunities to experience a variety of STEM activities from 3rd to 5th grade including the Cardboard Challenge, the Science Fair, Coding opportunities and our Pinewood Makerspace. We track the activities that each Pinewood student participates in and students who earn 10 STEM credits by the end of 5th grade are recognized as graduates of the Pinewood STEM Academy with a STEM Recognition Award at the 5th grade Moving Up Ceremony.



## Events Unique to the 5th Grade

### Swim Instruction

All fifth graders participate in swim instruction for five weeks each spring. Bathing suits and towels are required. Details are typically sent out by the physical education department each fall.

### 5th Grade Career day

Each year the K-5 School Counselors implement lessons that align with the career domain standards from the ASCA (American School Counselor Association) Model. In addition to these lessons an annual 5th Grade Career Day is planned to promote additional awareness of the variety of career and job opportunities there are. 5th grade parents and community members are invited to volunteer to come into 5th grade classrooms to present on their career. This is a valuable way for students to learn about many aspects of a variety of careers.

### Track and Field Day

Each year, fifth graders participate in a track and field day, during which the physical education department places students in different events and competitions. The morning consists of students completing and competing in track events, such as 50-meter dash, high jump and shot put. Students receive awards for placing first, second and third in each event. All students must show good sportsmanship. Please be aware that students who have not demonstrated appropriate behavior at Pinewood may lose this privilege and alternate plans will be made for them on this day. Students, parents, and teachers spend the afternoon together enjoying lunch and social activities.

### End-of-the-Year Field Trip

In June, the fifth-grade class takes an educational trip. This trip is a reward for completion of not only fifth grade, but also elementary school. Students need to be in good academic and behavioral standing in order to participate. The location and details of the trip change from year-to-year depending on cost and availability of venues.

### Moving Up

Moving-Up Day is a time when the administrators and teachers recognize fifth-grade students and present each one with a certificate. Because of limited seating, each family receives two tickets to attend the event. Additional family members can watch the ceremony in the LGI at Draper Middle School as we simulcast the event.

After the awards ceremony, everyone is welcome to join the students and their teachers for snacks and refreshments, which are provided by the fourth-grade classrooms.

## Library/Media Center

The Pinewood library circulates more than 44,000 books during the school year. There are more than 18,000 items in the collection, including books, periodicals and Playaways (books on MP3 players). The library has Internet access, databases and an automated circulation system. The librarian works in collaboration with classroom teachers to instruct information literacy and to promote reading.

The best way for a student to become a better reader is for him/her to read. At Pinewood, students are encouraged to select books that appeal to them. If a student is having trouble finding the right book, the student or his/her parent should contact the librarian for assistance.

### Circulation information

Students may take out three items at a time, and they may have up to five items checked out of the library at once. Exceptions are made for school projects and special circumstances. All items circulate for a period of two weeks.

The library is open for lending purposes from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Students are encouraged to utilize the library throughout the day.

Community members may also check out materials as community borrowers. Community borrowers must follow the same rules as students.

### Summer Circulation

Students are encouraged to check out materials at the end of the school year for summer reading. Third and fourth graders that are returning to Pinewood in the fall are encouraged to check out up to 5 books for the summer. Additionally, each Pinewood student selects one book each year for their summer reading project. Information relating to the summer reading project is distributed each spring.

### Overdue items and renewals

All books and magazines have a two-week circulation period. Books may be renewed for additional two-week loan periods. Students will not be allowed to borrow more materials until all over-due items are returned or paid for.

### Billing

In order to maintain the school's materials and resources, parents/students are responsible for what students take out from the library.

Bills for damaged materials or lost items must be paid before a student may resume borrowing from the library.

### Volunteers

Parent volunteers are needed for the Library Book Fair in September. Please contact the librarian by calling **(518) 356-8438**.



# Music & Art

## Music at Pinewood

Pinewood students are exposed to a variety of instruments in their music classes. They also sing, dance and learn the basics of reading music.

In fourth grade, students can join a singing group. The fourth- and fifth-grade choir meets after school once a week. After rehearsal, students can be picked up by parents or they may take the late bus.

In order to join the choir, students should enjoy singing, have a good attendance record and demonstrate positive behavior.

## The Band Program

Students who wish to be in the Pinewood band program are placed in a lesson group, which typically consists of four to six students. These groups meet once a week for 30 minutes. Students are required to attend these lessons in order to participate in the band.

In order to participate in lessons, students must have an instrument. Students should have an instrument by the middle of September; however, the sooner a student has their instrument, the sooner he/she can get started. Beginner lessons typically start during the last full week of September.

Participation in the band program is a commitment. Students are expected to come to their weekly lessons and practice 100 minutes per week. This commitment is necessary in order for students to have a successful experience.

## The Orchestra Program

The orchestra program at Pinewood is open to grades 3-5. Students who wish to participate will be placed in a small lesson group to learn their instrument. These groups meet once a week for 30 minutes beginning in September. Third graders will also participate in the Third Grade Orchestra, which rehearses once a week after school beginning in January. Fourth and fifth graders in the more advanced 4th/5th Grade Orchestra, which rehearses once a week after school beginning in October. The orchestras perform in concerts in the winter and spring.

Participation in the Mohonasen Orchestra Program is a commitment. Students are expected to attend all weekly lessons and rehearsal, as well as maintain a regular schedule of at home practice. This commitment is necessary for students to have a successful learning experience.

## Third Grade Orchestra and Pinewood Orchestra

As students become ready, they will be invited to join their respective orchestras. Third graders can join the Third Grade Orchestra, while fourth- and fifth-grade students can play in the prestigious Pinewood Orchestra.

When a student shows an appropriate skill level, a permission slip is sent home for the student to stay after school one day a week to rehearse with the orchestra. The Pinewood Orchestra rehearses during the entire academic year, while the Third Grade Orchestra begins each January.

## Performances

There are several performance opportunities for each performing group. A schedule of these events will be distributed at the beginning of each year.

While the orchestra music will be taught in lessons, students need to continue this work on their own by practicing at home. Students who do not demonstrate improvement may need additional time and practice before they are ready to perform.

## Art at Pinewood

During art class at Pinewood, students use a number of different mediums and learn about art history. Art Club is open to all Pinewood students who are enthusiastic about art and demonstrate positive behavior. The club typically meets after school. There are two sessions of Art Club during the school year to accommodate all of the students who wish to participate.

**Art smocks:** In order to help protect each student's clothing during art class, parents should send an art smock to school in September. A discarded, long-sleeve, oversized shirt is fine.



# Special Areas

## The Food Service Program

It's a fact. Students who are well-nourished are shown to have increased problem-solving abilities, memory, verbal fluency and creativity.

With that in mind, Mohonasen offers a food service program at the high school that is designed to fuel learning AND offering a variety of choices that appeal to teens.

### How Much Does Breakfast & Lunch Cost?

Due to Covid assistance, the USDA has allowed schools to provide free meals to all students for the school year 2021-22. Free and Reduced Price Meals applications are still required. Please turn them in as soon as possible. Students will be able to purchase snacks using their school meal account unless a parent turns in a note saying they do not want students to use their meal account for snacks.

### How Healthy Are School Meals?

Today's school meals are lower in fat and provide well-balanced servings from each food group. School lunches provide half of the recommended dietary allowances for calories, protein and vitamins A and C, iron and calcium.

Now, as a result of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, championed by former First Lady Michelle Obama and signed into law by President Obama in 2010, new school meal standards are taking effect that are designed to make them healthier than ever. According to the US Department of Agriculture, school meals must adhere to strict calorie limits, schools must serve a greater amount of fruits and vegetables, and there are limits to the amount of breads/grains served.

In addition, under the new law, all students MUST take a vegetable or a fruit with each meal.

As the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act continues to be implemented, you will see changes to foods and beverages sold during the school day. This includes food sold in vending machines, a la carte, school stores, snack carts and in-school fundraising.

Students who are well-nourished are better prepared to learn. By implementing consistent nutrition standards throughout all corners of the school building, we believe it will improve the overall health and well-being of our students.

For more information on the new meal standards, visit [www.mohonasen.org/food-service-program](http://www.mohonasen.org/food-service-program).

### Free and Reduced-Price Meals

Students may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals if their families meet federal guidelines. However, we still need free and reduced applications if you feel you would qualify. Free and reduced status is used for other benefits in addition to free meals. Please turn in your free and reduced applications regardless of free meals.

The application takes only minutes to fill out and can be done at any time during the school year.

Students are given pin numbers just like everyone else so their peers and food service workers are not aware which students are receiving free or discounted meals.

A copy of the application is mailed out each summer. The application can also be obtained by calling the food service office at **(518) 356-8225** or online at [www.mohonasen.org/forms/](http://www.mohonasen.org/forms/). A new application must be completed for the current school year.

All previous applications expire on Sept. 30.

## Health Office

### School Nurse Office

Welcome students, parents and guardians! These are a few reminders as we start the school year. As your school nurses, we are responsible with your assistance for monitoring your child's health and safety in the school setting throughout the year. With your help, the school health program can enhance and maintain the highest level of health for each student and provide a rewarding school experience. Please contact us with school health questions and concerns.

### Absences/Attendance

When a child is absent, his/her parent must notify the office at **(518) 356-8430** as soon as possible. If the school is not contacted by a child's parent/guardian, someone will call the person listed on the student's emergency card that morning.

New York State law requires that the school keep a written excuse of any student absence on file. When a student is absent, he/she should bring this excuse to the main office when they return to school. The excuse should state the student's first and last name, the reason for the absence, the date(s) of the absence and the parent's signature.

Please remember that vacations are NOT considered legal absences and teachers are not required to provide work.

### Health Office Emergency Card

This contact card will be sent home the first day of school. You will need to fill this out for the nurse office as soon as possible with updated contact information and health related information regarding food allergies and health conditions. If you have a student with an allergy requiring an Epi pen or Benadryl please make sure this is given to the nurse as soon as possible with a doctor's prescription regarding the medication dosage and use for the school year. Please include a note from you the parent /guardian to the nurse regarding the allergy and last known allergic reaction. This will aid in creating a care plan for the student and make the teachers, and kitchen staff aware of your child's food allergies. Please note that allergies in your classroom will be made known to you as soon as possible. Prompt return of emergency cards will help speed this process.

### Illness

If a child has symptoms of illness, such as sore throat, fever, upset stomach, diarrhea or uncontrolled cough, they should not be sent to school. It is school policy that, for your child's protection as well as that of their classmates, a student must be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before they return to school. For additional current information especially in light of the coronavirus, please check the district website as this information is continually being updated. Health and safety of our students is of the utmost importance and we shall endeavor to make the



health office and school a safe place as we uphold our commitment to you as a team of health professionals.

### **School Screening/Physicals**

Student physicals for New York State are required for incoming third graders and fifth graders. Please make an appointment with your child's physician to have your child's physical completed and sent to the nurse as soon as possible. Acceptable physicals will need to be dated from January of 2020. A school screening for vision and hearing is completed on all third- and fifth-grade students and new students if a current physical is not on record. School physicals will be conducted in the spring by our school physician. Please contact the nurse if you want to schedule a physical with our school physician. Forms are available on the Mohonasen website at [www.mohonasen.org](http://www.mohonasen.org).

### **Physical Education Excuses**

Physical activity and education is a very big part of a school day. As the school nurse I need to be aware of any physical limitations your child may have. From time to time accidents will happen and if your child comes in with a cast or crutches we need to be aware promptly of their new status. All limitations need to have a letter from the doctor to state the nature of their condition and limitations in regards to physical activity in PE class.

### **Medications**

All prescription and over-the-counter medication, will require an original signed physician order and a signed parent consent indicating medication name, dosage, time to be administered and for how long, reason for medication, and any adverse reactions that need to be observed. All over-the-counter medications are required to be in an original, unopened container. All meds need to be brought in by a parent to the health office and orders and consents have to be renewed each school year.

Please note that the signed student Emergency Information Health Card is not an acceptable parental consent for administering medication. Health Forms are on Mohonasen website. Please remember students are not allowed to carry, transport or store medication in school at any time. At the end of the year all medication must be picked up by a parent.

## **Students with Disabilities**

At Pinewood, students with disabilities frequently work side-by-side with their peers and are actively involved in all aspects of Pinewood life. The students often receive additional services or participate in specialized programs to accommodate their disabilities and facilitate success in school and life.

What follows is a BRIEF explanation of some of the district's programs, plans and resources for students with disabilities. For more information, parents should contact Mohonasen's Director for Special and Alternative Education at **(518) 356-8221**.

### **Consultant Teachers**

Since the goal is to provide a quality education in the least restrictive environment, most disabled students learn side-by-side with their peers in general education classrooms. Consultant teachers are special education teachers who work with the regular classroom teacher to help "integrated" students find success in the general education environment. Consultant teachers, for example, may



co-teach lessons, restructure assignments, provide special accommodations and follow-up with students and/or teachers after class.

### **Resource Room**

Special education teachers are available to meet with students in small groups outside the general education classrooms to make sure students receive the supplemental supports needed to meet high academic standards. The nature of these supports is spelled out in each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

The resource room is staffed by special education teachers who provide additional instruction to strengthen the skills of disabled students. Resource room teachers also work to provide students with necessary accommodations and modifications.

### **Special Class**

While all students with disabilities are encouraged to participate in general education classes, for some this environment proves to be challenging. Some students require the additional support and structure of special classes designed to address their unique instructional needs. These "self-contained" classes have low student-to-teacher ratios and allow for more individualized instruction related to academic, behavioral and social emotional needs.

### **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**

The Committee on Special Education must develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for all special education students.

In developing the IEP, the committee considers evaluations, student strengths, concerns of the parent and where appropriate, student performance on state and district assessments.

An IEP documents the following: present level of performance; how the student's disability impacts his/her participation in the general curriculum; classification of the disability; annual goals; recommended programs and services; eligibility for state or alternate assessments; a list of any alternative accommodations; a list of any assistive technology devices; and transitional goals at the appropriate time.

### **Program/Testing accommodations**

Students with IEPs or 504 Plans often have testing or classroom accommodations as part of their elementary program. Accommodations may include: additional strategies for participating in class activities, for acquiring class notes or for completing homework. Testing accommodations are provided only as the result of a recommendation by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) or 504 Compliance Committee.

### **504 Plans**

"504 Plans" are developed to support students whose physical or medical needs have a significant negative impact on their success in school. Special accommodations are written into 504 Plans to ensure that students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate education. Accommodations, for example, may include providing additional time and/or alternative locations for tests or special strategies for participating in class activities. A 504 Plan is not the same as an IEP (Individual Education Plan), which is generally much more intensive.



## Psychological testing

At the request of the Student Success Team and/or the parent/guardian, a student can receive psychoeducational testing, which may include tests of ability and/or achievement level. A psycho-educational evaluation must be authorized by Mohonasen's Office of Student Services. Testing is conducted by the school psychologist. Students with an IEP are required to receive an updated evaluation at least every three years.

## Web resources

The Internet is a helpful source of information for parents and students who want to learn more about a particular disability, find resources, network with others, etc. What follows are a few sites that address some common disabilities:

- Asperger Syndrome Education Network  
<http://aspennj.org/>
- Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (formerly known as VESID)  
[www.acces.nysed.gov](http://www.acces.nysed.gov)
- Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder  
<http://www.chadd.org>
- Learning disabilities  
<http://www.ldonline.com>
- National Attention Deficit Disorder Association  
<http://www.add.org>
- Center for Parent Information and Resources' Library  
<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/ourcelibrary/>
- Obsessive-Compulsive Foundation  
<http://www.ocfoundation.org>
- New York State Talking Book and Braille Library  
<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/tbbl/index.html>
- Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services  
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ose/index.html>

## Transportation services

Mohonasen transports approximately 3,000 students more than a half million miles annually. Staff in the Transportation Department work hard to provide safe and efficient service to all students.

Postcards are mailed home notifying students of their ASSIGNED bus stop approximately two weeks before the start of each new school year. Students are asked to report only to this stop.

Please be patient the first few weeks of school for adjustments to bus routes and times. Pick-up and drop-off times may vary 5-10 minutes either way.

## Transportation to Daycare

Parents wishing to have their child picked up or dropped off at a daycare or location other than their home must complete a request form that can be found on the district website, [www.mohonasen.org/transportation](http://www.mohonasen.org/transportation). Please contact the transportation office at **(518) 356-8260** with any questions.

Due to safety concerns, alternative busing arrangements from established drop-off locations are not possible except in the case of an emergency requiring building principal approval.

## Bus Rules

The school day starts when your child boards the bus. The bus is an extension of the classroom, and your child should apply those same rules with respect to how he or she treats the driver and fellow students. The bus is a moving vehicle, and by following the rules and treating others with respect, your child will help keep everyone safe.

All buses are school property and are subject to all rules set forth in the Code of Conduct. Each student has an individual responsibility to follow the rules.

Coming to school, going home and riding buses for extracurricular events or field trips, all students are expected to listen to and obey all instructions from transportation personnel and adhere to the following rules:

1. Behave in a safe and orderly manner at the bus stop, school bus port and on the bus.
2. Look both ways if crossing a road AND wait for the driver's hand signal or directions before crossing.
3. Enter and exit the bus in an orderly fashion.
4. Remain seated at all times.
5. Keep the bus clean and free of litter. Flinging things in or out of the bus is not allowed.
6. Keep all parts of your body inside the bus at all times.
7. Be responsible for your own belongings.
8. Always respect others, the bus and yourself.
9. Speak quietly, using appropriate and respectful language.
10. Refrain from activities that may damage the bus.
11. Do not bring food or drink on the bus to prevent allergic reactions, choking, safety and sanitary issues.
12. Do not bring objects onto the bus that may present a safety hazard, including skateboards, large musical instruments or school projects.

**Please note:** Any parent with a transportation issue or question should contact the transportation office at **(518) 356-8260** or their child's school rather than address the bus driver at the bus stop.

## Changing an assigned bus stop

If you want to request a change in an assigned bus stop, contact the transportation office by phone at **(518) 356-8260**. Mohonasen's policy is to try to honor change requests to existing bus stops — provided there is enough room on the bus.

For obvious safety reasons, the district's goal is to have no students forced to stand on buses. During the first two weeks of school, bus routes may need to be adjusted to meet this goal.

## Pinewood Proud on the Bus Program

At Mohonasen, it is very important that students feel safe and comfortable riding to and from school on the bus. The bus can be a place where bullying and other problems can occur.

We have established building-wide expectations in "Being Safe", "Being Responsible", and "Being Respectful", which includes when students are on the bus. Together, administrators, bus personnel,



teachers, parents, and students work on preventing and decreasing the amount of bullying and inappropriate behavior taking place while promoting a positive community on the bus.

Faculty and staff members facilitate meetings with each bus and driver three times a year during the school day to discuss the dynamics of the bus, identify potential or existing problems, discuss the rules of the bus, and to teach problem-solving and social skills.

## Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

The Elementary Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) serves students in Kindergarten through Grade 5 at Bradt Primary School and Pinewood Intermediate School. The PTO coordinates events and fundraising to benefit elementary students and the school community. New members and volunteers are always welcome. The PTO is a great way to actively participate in your child's education.

Learn more about the PTO at [www.mohonasen.org/pto](http://www.mohonasen.org/pto).









## **Pinewood Intermediate School**

901 Kings Road  
Schenectady, NY 12303  
(518) 356-8430

P A R E N T H A N D B O O K

**2021-2022**