

2025-2026

Pinewood

Intermediate School

Parent Handbook

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. 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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Grade 4

Christine Altomer
Cirstie Davis
Marie Furlong
Bryannah Green
Elizabeth MacMaster
Brittany McKeown
McKenzie Ryan
Lucas Rosen

Grade 5

McKenna Callahan
Brienne Clark
Brooke Haviland
Kelly Mullen
Lauren Neale
Lisa Smith
Carrie Townsend
Cristina Wheeler

Academic Skills

Christine Cipriano
Caitlin Cunniffe

Developmental Skills

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Kristen Taylor

Remedial Reading

Brianna Coughlin
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Remedial Writing

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District Contacts

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This & That

Academic Intervention Services (AIS)

At Pinewood, Academic Intervention Services (AIS) are provided to students who need additional support in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. We are also fortunate to offer AIS support specifically in writing, which helps us advance both our school and district-wide academic goals.

School districts are mandated to provide AIS to students who do not meet established benchmarks on state assessments. However, eligibility is not determined by test scores alone—multiple data points are reviewed as part of our district's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). The intensity and frequency of services are carefully tailored to meet each student's individual needs.

At Pinewood, AIS is delivered through multiple layers of instructional support designed to help students grow and succeed. Most services are provided on a pull-out basis, where students work in small groups outside the classroom for targeted instruction. However, there are times when providers also push into the classroom to offer support during regular instruction. Our reading and math specialists are highly trained to deliver these interventions using research-based strategies tailored to student needs.

We also provide after-school academic support sessions for students who qualify, offering additional opportunities for reinforcement and skill-building outside the regular school day.

Access to the Building After the School Day

All students are encouraged to take time during the school day to ensure they have packed all personal belongings and any instructional materials needed for that evening and the following school day. If a student needs to return to school to retrieve essential instructional items, the main entrance will remain open until 4:00 p.m., and main office staff will be available to assist during that time.

After-School Activities

Depending on interest and budgetary factors, Pinewood offers a variety of extracurricular activities each school year including, but not limited to:

- Art Club
- Band
- Chess
- Choir
- Coding Club
- Color Guard
- Intramurals (morning)

- Math Ninjas
- Math Olympiad
- Orchestra
- Student Council

Arrival/Dismissal Times

Arrival

School begins at **8:20 a.m.**, and it is **critical that students arrive on time** to start their day successfully. **Core instruction begins promptly at 8:45 a.m.**, and arriving late means students may miss essential academic content and disrupt the flow of their learning. Ensuring students are present and prepared by this time sets a strong tone for the rest of the day.

Students who arrive **after 8:40 a.m.** are considered **legally tardy** and **must be escorted into the building and signed in by a parent or guardian at the main entrance.**

Parent drop-off takes place in the third-grade parking lot loop. Students may be dropped off between 8:00 and 8:10 a.m. if they are having breakfast. All other students should arrive between 8:20 and 8:40 a.m. using the designated drop-off area.

After 8:40 a.m., students must enter through the main entrance, as the third-grade loop will be closed. For safety reasons, no student should be dropped off before 8:20 a.m. unless they are attending the school breakfast program, which begins at 8:00 a.m., **as there is no supervision prior to that time.**

We also want to make families aware that we continue to use an automated attendance system that will notify you if your child is marked absent from school.

We strongly encourage parents to support their child's success by establishing a consistent morning routine and making every effort to ensure timely arrival each day. A punctual start is a powerful step toward a productive and positive school experience.

Bus Drop off Process

Unlike with Bradt students, the District **does not** require an adult to be present at afternoon drop off for Pinewood students. Parents may choose to instruct their child(ren) not to get off the bus if they don't see a parent/guardian waiting for them and in such cases the driver will notify the transportation department who will then call the parent/guardian to determine a plan of action.

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. Photo identification is required. 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. Students who are in parent pickup will be dismissed from their classrooms at 2:40 p.m. 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. If there is no notification, the student will be placed on their typical bus route.

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 NWEA 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 5 will also take a science assessment. Please check the district website for testing dates.

Attendance

In order to ensure the greatest opportunity for academic success, it is expected that students will attend school daily during the required hours.

That said, the adopted Board of Education Attendance Policy requires that students who are absent from school must submit a written excuse, signed by a parent/legal guardian, within three days of their return or their school attendance record will permanently reflect an unexcused absence after this time (no backdating of excuses will be allowed after three days). The excuse should indicate both the reason and the date(s) of the absence. When a child is going to be absent, a phone call can be made on the morning of the absence by contacting 518-356-8430, but it will need to be followed up with a note or email to Pinewoodoffice@mohonasen.org as indicated above.

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

In grades 3-5, students may be considered for retention if they have missed more than 15% of the school year and are not meeting grade level expectations.

Attendance Policy (Policy 7110)

1. Purpose: The attendance expectation of Pinewood Elementary School is designed to promote regular attendance among students, in recognition of its critical importance to academic success and personal development. This expectation aligns with current New York State regulations and Rotterdam-Mohonasen Central School District Board Policy 7110 to ensure compliance and support for students' educational journey.

2. Attendance Requirements

- **Compulsory Attendance:** All students between the ages of 6 and 16 (inclusive) are required by New York State law to attend school regularly, unless legally excused.
- **School Day:** The school day at Pinewood Elementary begins at 8:20 AM and concludes at 2:50 PM. Students are expected to be present for the entire instructional day, unless excused for valid reasons (medical appointments and bereavement). The expectation is

that parents will provide a written note or email that morning explaining the reason for the tardy or early dismissal.

- **Tardiness:** Students arriving after 8:40 AM are marked tardy. Frequent tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment and may require intervention by school administration.

3. Reporting Absences

- **Parent/Guardian Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to notify the school by 9:00 AM on the day of their child's absence. Notifications should include the reason for the absence.
- **Methods of Notification:** Absences can be reported by phone (518-356-8430) or email (pinewoodoffice@mohonasen.org).

4. Excused and Unexcused Absences

- **Excused Absences:** Absences due to illness, medical appointments, religious observances, family emergencies, or other reasons approved by the school administration are considered excused. Documentation (medical excuse) will be required for prolonged absences (5 days or greater).
- **Unexcused Absences:** Absences without valid reasons or parental notification are considered unexcused. Excessive unexcused absences may lead to academic consequences, including, but not limited to, retention of the grade level or mandatory summer school attendance. Examples of unexcused absences include vacations, oversleeping, missing the school bus, mental health days without a doctor's note, etc.

5. Make-up Work

- Students are responsible for completing missed assignments and tests due to absences. Teachers will provide reasonable accommodations and make-up opportunities for missed work in accordance with school expectations.

6. Truancy

- **Definition:** Chronic truancy at Pinewood is defined as any excused or unexcused absences from school that result in the student missing 10% or more days within the academic school year. This equates to 18 absences per year and results in the student being designated "chronically absent" according to New York State regulations.
- **Steps taken to prevent Chronic truancy:** Students who exhibit patterns of truancy may face disciplinary actions in accordance with school guidelines (this may include the loss of privileges such as the ability to participate in school events), as well as possible retention. Prior to this, steps to help support the student and family will be implemented which may include parent conferences, attendance incentive plans, or a referral to appropriate county and state support services.

7. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- Parents or guardians will prioritize regular school attendance and communicate promptly with the school regarding absences.
- They should work with school personnel to address any attendance concerns and support their child's educational progress.

8. School Responsibilities

- Pinewood Elementary School will maintain accurate attendance records for all students in compliance with New York State regulations.
- The school will notify parents of any concerns regarding their child's attendance and work collaboratively to address issues that may arise.

9. Review and Amendments

- These attendance expectations will be reviewed annually by school administration to ensure alignment with New York State regulations and best practices in promoting student attendance.
- Amendments to the expectations may be made as necessary to reflect changes in state law or school procedures.

10. Contact Information

- For questions or concerns regarding these expectations, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the school office at 518-356-8430 or by email at pinewoodoffice@mohonasen.org ..

Birthday Celebrations

We understand that many students look forward to celebrating their birthdays with classmates, and we aim to make these moments special while promoting a positive and inclusive classroom environment. **Teachers have the flexibility to decide how birthdays are acknowledged**, so celebrations may vary by classroom. Please note that **large parties and gift bags are not permitted**.

To prioritize student safety—particularly for those with food allergies—**parents must coordinate with the classroom teacher at least a few days in advance** if they wish to send in a birthday snack. Snacks must be **individually portioned and nut-free**, and teachers will provide guidance on when and how they can be shared. **Healthy choices are encouraged**, such as fruit, cheese and crackers, pretzels, or dried fruit.

Birthday treats should be dropped off at the Main Office, and enough should be provided for **all students in the class**.

Another meaningful way to celebrate is by **donating a new book to the Pinewood Book Vending Machine**. Every student receives a book on their birthday, and family contributions help us keep the machine stocked with great options for all readers. If you are interested in this option, please contact the main office by phone or by emailing pinewoodoffice@mohonasen.org.

To protect the feelings of students and ensure classroom inclusivity, **birthday party invitations may only be distributed at school if the entire class is invited**.

While we will not provide a school-wide class directory this year, **families may choose to exchange contact information** with one another through the classroom teacher. In some cases, teachers may assist in facilitating this exchange with mutual agreement.

Thank you for partnering with us to create thoughtful, safe, and inclusive birthday celebrations for all students!

Breakfast

To ensure the well-being and focus of all our students, we kindly ask that you refrain from bringing fast food, caffeinated drinks, or sugary drinks onto the school premises during drop-off times. This policy supports our efforts in promoting healthy eating habits among our students and creating a positive atmosphere for learning from the moment they arrive.

We understand the convenience of grab-and-go meals, but by encouraging healthier alternatives, we contribute to the overall wellness of our school community. Your support in adhering to this policy is greatly appreciated and helps us in fostering a healthy environment for all.

Character Education

At Pinewood Elementary, we believe in teaching more than just academics—we are also committed to helping our students grow into kind, respectful, and responsible individuals. That's why we take great pride in our Character Education Program, which is a big part of what it means to be **"Pinewood Proud!"** At Pinewood, being *Pinewood Proud* means we strive every day to **Be Safe, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible**—core values that guide everything we do, from how we treat one another to how we learn and grow together. To support these efforts, we have incorporated an SEL program into daily instruction in all classrooms that is entitled the "Positivity Project". It is built on the concepts of 24 character strengths and learning how to practice the "Other person Mindset" with a focus on looking at the strengths that each of us possess.

Additionally, during the months of October-May, the Character Counts Committee focuses on specific character traits (examples include: respect, responsibility, kindness, honesty, teamwork, etc.), which teachers highlight as students are nominated each month who have displayed exceptional behavior that is symbolic of the trait 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. The first report card at Pinewood will be distributed at your child's parent-teacher conference.

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. More information on DASA can be found [here](#) on the school district website.

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.

The Code of Conduct serves as a standard for consistency and fairness that protects students' rights while promoting responsibility. You can view the code of conduct [here](#).

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. The following provides an overview of how it pertains to Pinewood.

Code of Conduct (Policy 7370)

Overview

Parents and students should refer to the District Code of Conduct for this specific policy as it relates to the expectations of students and faculty. For purposes of Pinewood, all conduct falls under the general guidelines as follows:

Be Safe/Be Respectful/Be Responsible

This includes all locations inside and outside the building, as well as the bus.

1. Hallway

1. Be Safe

- a. Teachers will have students in a line (this could be rows of two, teacher discretion)
- b. Walking in hallways.
- c. Students should not wear a hat/hood up in open areas inside the school.

2. Be Respectful

- a. Level zero (no talking as other classes are learning)

2. Bus

1. Be Responsible

- a. Assigned seating.
- b. Level 1 noise level on the bus.
- c. Cell phone: There should not be cell phone use on the bus. Inappropriate use of cell phones (filming of others, videos depicting sexual content, violent content and/or inappropriate language) on a bus will result in an automatic three day bus suspension.

2. Be Safe

- a. Stay seated
- b. Hands and Feet to yourself (no physical contact with another person)
- c. No food or drink on buses

3. Classroom

1. Be Safe

Hands and Feet to yourself (no physical contact with another person)

2. Be Respectful

Speak respectfully to each other

3. Be Responsible

Follow your directions/rules (please establish together as a class community at the beginning of the year).

4. Cafeteria

Assigned seating by classroom teacher at the beginning of the year. Lunch aide discretion on earning the choosing of seats in following four cafeteria rules as follows:

1. **Be Safe**
 - a. Hands and Feet to yourself (no physical contact with another person)
 - b. Walk in the cafeteria
2. **Be Respectful**
 - a. Level 1 voice
 - b. Speak respectfully
3. **Be Responsible**
 - a. Clean up after yourself
 - b. Raise your hand to get up

5. Playground

1. **Be Safe**
 - a. Keep you hands and feet to yourself
 - b. No contact games such as “jack pot” or “tag”
 - c. Do not climb up the slides
2. **Be Respectful**
 - a. Speak Respectfully
3. **Be Responsible**
 - a. Follow Directions including using playground equipment appropriately

Dress Code

All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Students and their parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for acceptable student dress and appearance. Teachers and all other district personnel should exemplify and reinforce acceptable dress and help to develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school setting.

Interpretation of the dress code will be at the discretion of the building administration. Specifics on the interpretation of the dress code are provided by individual buildings.

In all cases, a student’s dress, grooming and appearance, including hair style, jewelry, makeup and nails, shall:

- Be safe, appropriate and not disrupt or interfere with the educational process Including but not limited to banning of spikes (i.e. dog collars), large pins, large chains, etc.
- Recognize the inappropriateness of wearing extremely brief garments, revealed midriffs, and see-through garments and accordingly refrain from the wearing of such as they are distracting to the educational setting and mission of the district and its students.
- Ensure that underwear is completely covered with outer clothing.

- Include safe footwear at all times. Footwear that is a safety hazard will not be allowed. Including but not limited to “heelies,” slippers, roller skates, etc.
- Not include the wearing of over-ear headphones, earbuds or hats/ headgear in the school except for a medical or religious purpose
- Not include items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous or denigrate others on account of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.
- Not promote and/or endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities or suggestive material.
- Not denote or represent gang affiliation.

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.

Cell Phones/Electronics

In alignment with New York State’s new “bell-to-bell” cell phone restriction, recently signed into law by the Governor, students are not permitted to use cell phones during the school day. At Pinewood Elementary, we strongly discourage students from bringing cellphones to school at all.

If a student does bring a phone, it must remain **powered off and securely stored in their backpack** from the moment they arrive until the end of the school day—including all instructional time, lunch, recess, and transitions. Bradt and Pinewood students are also prohibited from using cell phones on the school bus.

If a student is found using a cell phone during the school day or on the bus, the student will be required to turn their phone into administration and the phone will be secured in the main office. A parent or guardian will be contacted and will need to **pick up the phone in person**. Repeat offenses will lead to disciplinary action as outlined in the Code of Conduct.

These expectations are in place to foster student focus, safety, and positive peer interactions throughout the day. We appreciate your partnership in reinforcing these rules with your child.

Trading Cards/Toys

All toys 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. If your child brings these items to school, they will be asked to put them away. A second offense will result in a teacher/staff member taking the item and having it sent to the office for a parent/guardian to pick up.

Enrichment Opportunities

We are excited to offer a number of enrichment opportunities after school and during the school day for the 2025-26 school year. Participation in these programs typically follow an open enrollment process, but there are also programs that require specific academic criteria to participate in. Information on these opportunities will be provided at Open Houses as well as throughout the school year.

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/Food Service Program

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 that is designed to fuel learning AND offering a variety of choices that appeal to teens.

How Much Does Breakfast & Lunch Cost?

We are now a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school. All students enrolled at all Rotterdam-Mohonasen Schools are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at school at no charge to your household each day of the 2025-26 school year. No further action is required of you. Your child(ren) will be able to participate in these meal programs without having to pay a fee or submit an application. However, to assist the school district in retaining the free program for your child(ren), families are encouraged to complete the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Household Income Eligibility Form. This form is also used to determine eligibility for additional State and Federal program benefits that your child(ren) may qualify for.

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 Mohonasen's Food Service Program, visit www.mohonasen.org/district-services/food-services/

Lunch Guests

The Pinewood cafeteria is more than just a place to eat—it's an environment where students develop important social skills and learn appropriate behaviors for dining in public settings.

To help students adjust to routines and expectations, **lunchroom visits by parents or guardians will begin in October.** This initial period gives children time to become familiar with procedures and promotes independence.

Lunchroom Visit Guidelines:

- Check-in: All visitors must sign in with the cafeteria monitor upon arrival.
- Frequency: To manage space and maintain a calm environment, we kindly ask that visits be limited to once per month per guest.
- Lunch Options: Visitors may:
 - Purchase a school lunch (options include hot lunch, PB&J, yogurt, or bagel)
 - Bring a simple bagged lunch from home
- ***Please note: Fast food is not allowed in the cafeteria.***

For the safety and well-being of all students, **guests may not share food with or lend money to any child other than their own.** This policy helps us prevent allergic reactions and other health concerns.

Please send a note to your child's teacher **on the morning of your visit** indicating your intent to attend and your lunch choice if applicable.

We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to welcoming you into our lunchroom community in a way that supports all students' safety, development, and enjoyment.

"Next to New" Closet

At Mohonasen, we understand that many families are feeling the effects of today's rising costs — especially when it comes to purchasing school supplies and clothing. If your family could use a little help, **we're here and ready to support you.**

All it takes is a quick call or message to let us know there's a need. Whether it's a temporary situation or ongoing support, we encourage families to take full advantage of the resources available through our district.

One of these resources is Pinewood's **"Next to New" Closet**, now located in the Anchor Room at the high school. This space offers a variety of donated (gently used or sometimes new) clothing items and school supplies for students who need them. If you could benefit from this support, please contact the school social worker or main office — we're happy to help get you connected.

These services are part of a district-wide initiative known as **MohonCARES (Connecting Area Resources to Empower Students)**. Through this program, students in grades K–12 receive essential items like food, clothing, and toiletries — helping meet needs both in and outside the classroom.

When a student's basic needs are met, they are better equipped to focus, engage, and thrive academically. That's why programs like these are so vital to the success of our school community.

MohonCARES is powered by the generosity of our families, community partners, and district staff. If you would like to support this effort, please visit mohonasen.org and click on the **MohonCARES** icon to make a donation.

Your child's well-being matters to us. Don't hesitate to reach out — **we are here for you.**

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.). Additionally, students should have appropriate footwear to participate safely. Students who do not come to school with appropriate clothing will be asked to remain in the cafeteria during recess.

ParentSquare

The district utilizes a communications system known as ParentSquare 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 ParentSquare 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 ParentSquare. Additionally, you will have the option to download the ParentSquare app which will be able to provide additional features. Additional resources and information for parents can be found at:

<https://parentsquare.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/categories/200330735-Parents-Guardians-Students>

If you find that you have not been receiving these messages, please call with your updated contact information at (518) 356-8430.

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.

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.

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. This year, our student council will have a special focus on service learning.

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 beginning in Kindergarten and progress by 10 minutes as they advance in grade level. An example being a third grader should expect to have no more than 40 minutes (K=10, 1st=20, 2nd=30, 3rd=40) of homework per night. However, this is just a general guideline and teachers vary in their beliefs and system for assigning work. We would ask that if your child requires additional time exceeding this guidance to contact your teacher so an appropriate plan can be developed.

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. This time would be exclusive from the time indicated above for homework.

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. If you notice that homework exceeds the recommended time period on a regular basis, you are encouraged to reach out to your child's teacher to come up with a plan.

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 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.

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 homepage and click on the MohonCARES icon to make a donation.

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 or Carnival Day

In June, the fifth-grade class takes an educational trip, or more recently, participates in a full day Carnival. Both of these options are 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 via a YouTube channel 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 8:20 a.m. to 2:50 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.

On the day of evening performances, please be aware that all students travel to the highschool to participate in, or be part of the audience, for a mock performance that prepares the performers for the evening performances.

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

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.

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 2024. 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.

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.

Hand Sanitizer Use

Pinewood will be making alcohol-based hand sanitizers available in its school buildings. If parents/guardians wish to opt their child out of using it, they should send a written notice to the school.

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
- 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/resource-library/>
- 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. 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. **No cell phone usage on the bus. Cell phones, if brought to school, should be turned off and in the student's backpack until the student is dismissed from the school bus.**
6. Keep the bus clean and free of litter. Flinging things in or out of the bus is not allowed.
7. Keep all parts of your body inside the bus at all times.
8. Be responsible for your own belongings.
9. Always respect others, the bus and yourself.
10. Speak quietly, using appropriate and respectful language.
11. Refrain from activities that may damage the bus.
12. Do not bring food or drink on the bus to prevent allergic reactions, choking, safety and sanitary issues.
13. Do not bring objects onto the bus that may present a safety hazard, including skateboards, large musical instruments or school projects.

Failure to follow the rules on the bus can result in disciplinary action, including, but not limited to lunch detention, detention, and bus suspension. Bus suspensions will be administered in a progressive manner up to 5 days. After this point, a loss of this privilege will be considered (done on a trimester basis).

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.