



Orchard Elementary
Ridgewood Public Schools

Mary K. Ferreri, Principal
201-670-2730
mkferreri@ridgewood.k12.nj.us

Good Morning Orchard School Families,

March comes in like a lion... While there are many explanations for the famous adage regarding our calendar month, it also rings quite true here in school. We are in the midst of a busy portion of our school year, with new academic concepts being taught and many exciting events on our calendar. Here at Orchard, we are at our busiest - and it feels great! The hum of energy and feeling of purpose in our classrooms is contagious. We look forward to sharing that with you during our **Celebrate Learning Day** on Friday, March 22.

Did you know that today is the [National Day of "Unplugging"](#)? It runs from sundown to tonight to sundown tomorrow. Use this as another opportunity to spend quality time together as a family. Visit Super Science Saturday, or perhaps play in the (surprise?) snow!

Please read below to learn more about many other exciting events in and around Orchard School.

School Budget Vote - 2019-2020 School Year

Are you aware that this year our community will be voting on our school budget for the 2019-2020 school year? This important vote will take place on Tuesday, April 16. If you know that you will be away during that vacation week, stop by the main office for a [vote by mail application](#).

The Board of Education will be hosting school budget presentations. You can attend or view their regularly scheduled March BOE meetings, attend a specific budget presentation (3/18 @ GW, 7 PM; 3/19 @ BF, 7 PM), or attend our March HSA meeting on March 21st. Please be sure to inform yourself on this important vote!

What Parents Need to Know About Momo

An online hoax, Momo, has been around for some time but has recently resurfaced. You may have seen some reports about it on local news outlets. While it is important to recognize that [we don't panic](#), it is a good reminder to monitor your child's online activities carefully and be prepared to answer any questions that they may have. You may also find the following resources helpful: an [Online Safety Guide for Parents](#) published by National Online Safety, and our favorite [Common Sense Media](#) has some information about this and other online hoaxes.

Choose to Be Nice - Family "No Homework" Nights!

Each month at Orchard School, we celebrate our [Choose to Be Nice](#) theme at a Community Building Assembly. This month, our theme of perseverance is Honesty, and we are reading a fun book called [The Boy Who Cried Bigfoot](#). We will share out on this topic at our March 21 CBA.

Our "Choose to Be Nice Family Night" will be held on **Monday, March 18th**. That night, our teachers will not assign any homework. Instead, we are encouraging families to get together and enjoy some quality time with one another. This month, we are assigning the night on a Monday. Perhaps that works best for your family, or perhaps you'd like to try to organize your quality time on a night that works better for you!

Stay tuned for more "Choose to Be Nice No Homework Nights" in the future!

Wellbeing Speaker Series: Cheryl Charles, March 11, 7 PM @ GWMS

Our next Wellbeing Speaker Series presentation will be held on Monday, March 11th, at 7 PM. Dr. Cheryl Charles, a colleague of [Richard Louv](#), will be presenting on "[Nature Rich Environments](#)". This is the first of two upcoming events on the topic of play. This talk sounds like a unique and interesting topic to kick off spring. We hope that you will make time for this interesting and informative night!

Media Usage & Families: An Orchard Conversation

Our first Orchard evening on this topic was held on February 13. We had a nice turnout of parents, and I appreciated hearing from more of you who weren't able to attend that evening!

That night, we reviewed the benefits (yes, there are benefits!) of media use and technology for our students, families, and ourselves. We also considered the ways in which we need to be cautious and where boundaries and education are important for our students. Utilizing the [Common Sense Media](#) website as our primary source, we began considering how our work together as a community can benefit us all. All families struggle with similar concerns surrounding media and technology usage, and our hope in hosting these nights is to provide a common forum where we can discuss these topics together.

Two resources from our February night are linked here. The first is the [parent presentation](#) that we reviewed. You can follow along on the link for yourself and see some interesting facts and statistics that have been compiled regarding school-aged children and technology. Secondly, please take a look at this incredible resource - the [parent bundle](#). In these 15 short pages, you will find information on various topics, including: browser hacks to keep your internet safe for kids, questions to ask before you get your child a phone, a parent guide to YouTube, social media red flags to watch out for, what to do if your child is cyberbullied, and many more topics.

So, what's next?

For starters, we will tentatively plan to hold these meetings quarterly, about 4 times a school year. Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 30, at 7:30 PM. At that meeting, we will review how we can set some parameters for media consumption and technology usage during the summer months. Additionally, we will work to create a draft of our "Orchard School Media Agreement". This agreement will be created in a similar manner to a [Family Media Agreement](#). Currently, each year, our students in grades 2-5 sign an acceptable use policy. This policy essentially has students promise to physically take care of their chromebooks, and responsibly use them for only the purpose their teacher has intended. We'd like to take a step further next year, and have students consider the etiquette aspect as well. Are our students thinking first? Communicating openly? Keeping a healthy balance?

Those of you who can attend on April 30, please plan for a working meeting where we can draft this document together. We will put this out to our school community in our May update for consideration and feedback from everyone!

Mark your calendars for **Tuesday, April 30 at 7:30 PM, at Orchard School.** I look forward to seeing you then!

Ana Homayoun Newsletters

Our wellbeing speaker in January was Ana Homayoun. If you attended the event, you may have subscribed to her newsletter afterwards. Her newsletters are chock full of great information and pieces. This month, she shared an interesting op-ed from the New York Times, [They Left Me Out and I Saw it All](#). This piece discusses the difference between fear of missing out, and knowing you are missing out. While the author is speaking about her life as a college freshman, we hear many times that these issues affect our children and certainly our middle schoolers. While the piece is worth reading, Ana's newsletter provides ideas and resources for families to help in these moments. She also had a great link regarding [conversation starters for teens](#).

If you haven't yet, [subscribe to email updates](#) from Ana!

As with every monthly update, we need reminders about our procedures and policies here at Orchard. Please take note of the following:

- Thank you to our visitors for following through on our new procedures this year. As a reminder, forgotten lunches can be dropped off to the cooler near the cafeteria doors. We also do not accept drop offs for after school activities (girl scouts, clubs, etc.). Please remember to pack those items with your child in the morning. Thank you!
- Yearbook Photos: All families are encouraged to upload photos for our 2018-19 school yearbook. The yearbook is a K-5 project, so all families are encouraged to participate! You can use [this link directly](#) or find the link on our [Orchard website](#).
- Drop Off/Pick Up: It has gotten cold and we are now relaxing a bit on our 3 PM pickups. Please follow these rules for the safety of everyone.
 - Please remember to pull all the way up if using the drop off lane in the morning. Also, please wait in that line and do not pull out of the line once your child has exited.
 - At pick up time, please do not double park and please remember that we

do not have a pick up and go area - the red fire zone is just that! Please do not pull up or double park into the red zone for pickup.

- Link and follow our Google Calendar for HSA events! [Go to this link](#) and click on the +Google Calendar in the right bottom corner.
- Lunch Ordering: Just some reminders for ordering lunch through [Village Fresh](#). All orders are placed online. Orders must be in **by 8:00 AM**, otherwise, they will not be delivered on that day. Get your orders in! Thank you!

Please review the list of dates below for upcoming events at our school. Happy Holidays!

Warmly,



Mrs. Ferreri

Upcoming events:

3/2: Super Science Saturday
3/6: Author Visit!
3/15: International Night, 5:30 PM
3/21: CBA - Spirit Day - CTBN - HSA Meeting @ 9:15 AM
3/22: Celebrate Learning Day
4/3: Delicious Apple Banquet, 6:30 PM
4/6: Drama Performance, 7:00 PM
4/12: No School, Staff Development Day
4/15-4/19: No School, Spring Recess
4/16: Ridgewood School Budget Vote