



Orchard Elementary  
Ridgewood Public Schools

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Good Afternoon Orchard School Families!

Hello, fall! I hope that you have enjoyed a lovely weekend and this gorgeous weather. We have already finished one month of school, which seems impossible to believe. Many thanks to our HSA for an enjoyable and fun Back to School Picnic last week! We look forward to the upcoming fun events to come!

Our Fun Day is set for Saturday, October 20. We hope that all families can find time to stop by! Please see the email from your class parent seeking volunteers for Fun Day. Perhaps you can help in some way.

Please read below for highlights of Orchard events and happenings. Happy Fall!

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### **Visiting our School**

This year, we are taking increased security measures for our schools. You have just received a letter from Dr. Fishbein regarding important new visitor protocols to our schools. The letter explains the TPASS visitor system, which has been installed at Orchard and at all schools. If you did not read the letter in your email, you may [view it here](#). The TPASS system is set to begin on Monday, October 8.

In addition to the new requirements for all visitors, we will be following through on the recommendations for items that have been “forgotten” at home. Here are some important highlights:

- All lunches that are dropped off during the morning will be left outside in the labeled cooler. The cooler is checked prior to the lunch periods and lunches are brought down to the cafetorium. *Please note: while we will follow through with the cooler all year, we do not recommend this practice. Instead, we encourage you to work out a system at home that allows your child to bring their lunch to school with them at the start of the school day.*

- We will no longer allow delivery of forgotten items to the school. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: water bottles, homework, instruments, sneakers, jackets, snack, sports equipment for practices, and other items.
- Teachers will still leave homework for children who are out due to illness and parents have requested. Parents or guardians will be allowed in to retrieve the school work and/or drop off work if the absence is ongoing.
- Any medical necessity will be allowed, at any time.

We are not only instituting this practice to lessen the amount of visitors to our schools, but to also help instill independence and responsibility in students. Many of you may remember our evening with Jessica Lahey in February of 2017, when she relayed her own reasons for not bringing her son's "forgotten" homework to school. We believe that this helps students, not hurts them, as they experience a natural consequence - with very little consequence attached. At the elementary level, there is no penalty for forgotten items, or for missing a class such as PE or instrumental. Instead, these normal and natural moments can provide young students with opportunities to grow socially and emotionally. They will have to explain to a teacher (who will handle it gently), and then may not be able to participate fully in the class (dependent on what was forgotten). This minor discomfort will all be forgotten as soon as that class period or event is over. We believe that this is a natural part of childhood and fits with the developmental expectations for K-5 students. We encourage you to make this a "we" conversation at home - packing a backpack for the next day and all that it brings is not a parent/guardians job - no matter the age of your child!

### **Volunteering at School**

Years of research have continually proven that a strong collaboration between home and school is essential for student success. Now that correlation extends beyond, and includes added benefits when you volunteer your time at school! This [recent article](#) in the WSJ shares tips for how to get involved at all levels of school: elementary, middle, and high school.

We have often teased about the fact that middle schoolers do not "want you there" once they enter GWMS, and that the prime years for volunteering are at the elementary age. There are many ways to get involved at Orchard! Whether you are a full time working parent, a stay at home parent, or somewhere in between, there is something for everyone - and your child appreciates it and thrives because of it. Please stay abreast of your class parent emails, our e-news, and our calendar to consider how you can lend a hand at Orchard. You can also email our HSA VP Volunteer Coordinator, Nicole Liu: [liunikki\\_mail@yahoo.com](mailto:liunikki_mail@yahoo.com).

**Community Outreach Program:** Next month, we kick-off our first Community Outreach program with a continued focus on media usage. Dr. Michele Borba will present on "Raising UnSelfies: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me, Plugged-In, Trophy-Driven World" at 7 PM at GWMS. You can learn more about the presentation and [her work via her website](#). On Tuesday, October 30, we will host a book discussion with district administrators and parents as a follow up to her presentation. I hope you make time to attend these informative and thought-provoking events - you will walk away with something to think about or try! For more information, please visit the [RPS website](#) to view the information for the Well-Being series.

**HSA Meetings:** As always, we encourage all parents to attend our HSA meetings. Our monthly meetings are on Thursdays, directly following CBA. Our October meeting will be on **Thursday, October 18, at 9:15 AM**. This meeting will feature the ever popular "Puberty for Petrified Parents" presentation, given by our very own Mrs. Coates. Fifth grade health encompasses family life, and Mrs. Coates will share information about how and when that is taught at our October HSA meeting. All upcoming HSA [meeting dates are listed on our website](#).

### **Walk to School Month:**

In walking to Orchard school, many of our students cross busy streets, such as Ackerman, Lincoln, and Bellair. Be sure your child knows to walk to the crosswalks and to be crossed by a crossing guard! It doesn't matter their age - we live in a busy area and the hours around school drop off and pick up are often hectic times. If you have a child who bikes/scoots to school, remind them to walk their bike or scooter across the street. They must also walk their bike/scooter once on Orchard property. Children in fourth or fifth grade are permitted to bike/scoot to school.

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As with every monthly update, we need reminders about our procedures and policies here at Orchard. Please read below on two items of note:

- **Drop Off/Pick Up:** 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. Additionally, 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 into the red zone for pickup. Finally, please remember - and tell all caregivers - the assigned spot for the HSA winner is assigned! Please do not park there. Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our students safe!

- 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 October!

Warmly,



Mrs. Ferreri

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### Upcoming events:

- 10/2: Well Being Series: Michele Borba, "Unselfie", 7 PM @ GWMS*
- 10/8: Staff Development Day - No School for Students*
- 10/17: Staff Appreciation Breakfast ([K-2 families can volunteer here](#))*
- 10/18: CBA - CTBN; Spirit Day; HSA Meeting (Spotlight on 5th grade health classes)*
- 10/19: Bag a Lunch Fundraiser*
- 10/20: Fun Day!*
- 10/23: Jingle Bell Jog*
- 10/31: Halloween Parade, 2:00 PM*