



Bridge School

FAMILY & STUDENT HANDBOOK 2021-2022

BRIDGE SCHOOL

Bridge School is a Vermont state-approved independent elementary school. The school was established in 1980 as a 501c (3) non-profit organization.

Head of School

Bridge School is a teacher-run school. Bridge School is administered by one Head of School who is responsible for implementing and overseeing every aspect of administration and education. The Head of School reports to The Board. Parents/guardians should feel free to contact the Head of School at any time to discuss issues or concerns.

JEN GRILLY

jen@bridgeschoolvermont.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Parents and community members constitute the current Board of Directors. Board members direct fundraising, maintenance of buildings and grounds, alumni relations, and the hiring/supervising of Head of School and Teachers. The Board, in concert with the teachers, engages in long-range planning and creates the annual school budget. The board meets every month. Decisions of the Board are reached by consensus. New members are invited by the sitting Board.

BOARD MEMBERS 2020-2021

Pam Marsh, President	pashamarsh@gmail.com
Maggie Carrera-Bly, Vice-President	margaretcarrerably@gmail.com
Sarah Schumacher, Secretary	snschumacher@gmail.com
Noah Graham, Treasurer	ngraham@middlebury.edu
Ryan McCue	rmccue@gmail.com
Parker Montgomery	middmont@gmail.com
Nick Stewart	stewartns@gmail.com
Halina Lyons	lyons.halina@gmail.com

Sam Liebhaber
Molly Struhammer

slieb@middlebury.edu
mollyjean826@gmail.com

COMMUNICATION

Home Center Teachers: Your child's Home Center teacher is the best person to contact with questions or comments about your child's life, both socially and academically, at school. The Home Center is your child's base at Bridge School, and the school day begins and ends here. **For social concerns**, your child's Home Center teacher is in the best position to explore problems, gather information and make suggestions, so please contact him/her first with any concerns. **For academic concerns**, your child's Home Center teacher is also the first person to contact, even if the Home Center teacher does not teach your child's specific class. If other teachers need to be involved, the Home Center teacher will make arrangements to facilitate this communication.

Head of School: The Head of School is in charge of overseeing all aspects of Bridge School, including curriculum, school safety programs, and strategy. Any concerns, at any time, can be brought to Jen.

You should contact your child's Home Center Teachers if your child's pick-up plans change, or if they will go to the after-school program.

Jaime will oversee health and safety, so it is vital that she has current immunization records, emergency contact information, and medication dissemination information. Jaime also oversees admissions/enrollment forms, tuition payments, and building use.

Calling and Texting: Because we have a busy day, the best form of communication is texting the school number at 802-349-1661 or emailing your Home Center. We will try to return phone calls as soon as we are able.

Student, Family and Community Policies

TUITION AND FEES

Payment is due as outlined on your student contract. If an invoice is received, payments are due upon receipt. Interest at the rate of 1.5% per month (18% per annum) will be charged on all unpaid balances after 30 days. Bridge School relies upon tuition to maintain annual programs. As a reminder, by signing the student contract, **you have accepted responsibility for paying the full tuition, whether or not your child completes the full school year.**

KEEPING YOUR INFORMATION CURRENT

Parents/guardians submit emergency contact information at the beginning of the school year. Please inform us immediately about any changes in address, phone number, or email. We also need to know of any changes in health or allergies that may impact your child's safety and well-being at school.

REPORTS & CONFERENCES

A comprehensive student report will go home twice each year – at the end of January and in June.

Parents and Home Center teachers also participate in a Parent-Teacher Conference each year in October and March. Conference scheduling will be coordinated by the Home Center teacher. *If you have any questions or concerns throughout the school year, please contact your child's Home Center teacher as soon as possible. We want to hear from you!*

WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

CHANGE OF CLOTHES & BOOTS

Please be sure your child has a complete change of clothes at school every day. This is not just for bathroom accidents, but also for impressive mud puddle or pond accidents. All students are required to wear boots during recess when it is wet. Please consider leaving a pair of rubber boots at school year round and bringing in snow boots during the winter.

SNEAKERS & SAFE RECESS SHOES

Every child needs a clean pair of shoes at school every day to wear inside classrooms and in the gym. For recess and outside activities, children must have a separate pair of close-toed shoes that attach securely to their feet. Crocs and flip flops are not allowed outside or for gym play but may be worn indoors. Children may not be barefoot anywhere on school property.

SNACK & LUNCH

We have a mid-morning snack at 10:00 and lunch at 12:30. **Please inform your child's Home Center teacher if there are any special concerns about food or other allergies.** Please pack healthy foods and adequate/generous portions to nourish your child while s/he is at school. Children are not able to refrigerate or heat their lunches at school. Students will be discouraged from sharing their foods and beverages with one another during snack and lunch given concerns about COVID-19, allergies and restrictions on diets. To help limit cross contamination, please work with your child to ensure all parts of their lunches are easily opened independently.

HAT & SUNSCREEN

We plan to spend a lot of time outside during the school year and a hat with a brim and sunscreen will further protect your child from the elements.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

We do not allow students to use any electronic devices, such as games, music, or cell phones, while at school. If you want your child to have a device for use after school hours, it must be turned off and left in a backpack in the cubby during the school day. Please discourage your child from bringing valuables to school.

COVID UPDATES:

MASKS

Staff and students will wear masks inside and when physical distancing can't be maintained. Students must wear a mask as they arrive and should have an extra mask in their backpack. Masks should go home and be washed before they are used at school again.

BEACH TOWEL

Please consider sending in a beach towel for your child to use as an "island." It helps give students a visual of physical distancing and can be a great barrier from scratchy grass when having class outside. This towel will be sent home regularly for cleaning.

DAILY SCHEDULE:

8:15-8:30	Students arrive in Home Center, Morning Responsibilities
8:30-8:40	Morning Meeting
8:40-9:00	ChunkaChunka
9:00-10:00	Language Arts
10:00-10:15	Snack
10:15-11:05	Little Recess
11:05-11:15	Math
11:15-12:00	Explorations
12:00-12:30	Recess
12:30-12:50	Lunch
12:50-1:20	D.E.A.R (Drop Everything and Read)
1:20-2:05	Arts
2:05-2:45	Home Center
2:45	School Dismissed
2:45-5:30	After-School Program

ATTENDANCE

ARRIVAL 8:15-8:30

We expect students to arrive between 8:15 and 8:30 in the morning. You are welcome to join your student for their morning routine and Morning Meeting. We ask that you promptly leave after 9:00 to allow a smooth transition for all students to Language Arts.

It is important that students arrive at school between 8:15 and 8:30. Morning Meeting starts at 8:30. Students arriving after 8:30 are considered late. Students make their ChunkaChunka selection during arrival time and can be frustrated with not getting a choice because of late arrival.

Morning Meeting is a wonderful opportunity for our community to gather and begin each day with a game, song, mindfulness practice or another engaging activity. Because it's important for all of our staff to attend meeting, if you are arriving after 8:30 please wait in your car until after Morning Meeting when a staff member can greet you.

DISMISSAL 2:45 PM

We expect students to be picked up at 2:45. If we have not heard from parents regarding a delay in pick up, and students are not picked up by 3:00, they will be sent to the after school program and charged for their attendance.

ABSENCES & LATENESS

If your child will be absent or arriving after 8:30, please text or call the school phone at 802-349-1661. If your child arrives between 8:30 and 8:45 please wait in your car until a staff member can greet you to sign your child in. If Morning Meeting is happening inside, please ring the doorbell after 8:45 and wait for a staff member to greet you.

SNOW DAYS & CANCELLATIONS

We automatically cancel school and have a delayed start if the Addison Central Supervisory Union (Mary Hogan School, MUMS, MUHS) cancels school or delays. If you see that the Middlebury public schools are closed, you should plan for Bridge to be closed. Because many staff and families have a distance to drive, we may sometimes make an independent decision to cancel. We make cancellation decisions very early in the morning at the latest. To find out if school is cancelled: Check your e-mail, local television stations (such as WCAX) and radio stations (such as VPR) for up-to-date closure lists. Many of our students travel quite far and the conditions in your area may be very different from Middlebury. If you decide to keep your child home due to the weather, please call or text before 8:30.

PICK-UP & OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

If someone other than you, or those designated on your Emergency Card, will pick up your child, we must have written permission. Even if another Bridge School parent is picking up your child, we must have written permission, so leave a note with the teacher doing attendance in the morning. We do not allow students to call home during the school day to make plans to go home with another student. We ask that all arrangements be made at home the night before.

ACTR BUS

Written permission is also required if your child will be taking the ACTR bus. The bus stops at Bridge School around 3:00pm each day. Please note that the bus has been unreliable in the past, and if it fails to stop at Bridge School, we will contact you and place your child in the after-school program until you can arrive for pick up.

PARKING LOT

Please be very careful and drive slowly in our parking lot. In the morning, there is no parking beyond the green fence because children may be playing on the playground. In the afternoon, if the fence is gone, parking is allowed because it means that there are no kids on the playground.

IN-SERVICE DAYS

We have in-service and early release days throughout the year. We use this time for professional development and preparation for special events in the year, such as The Big Show, graduation and Collar Day and extra cleaning. Please pay close attention to the school calendar.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM 2021-2022

The Bridge School After-school Program, otherwise known as Bananas, is a place for students to relax after a big day, complete their homework, and participate in a variety of enrichment activities.

Schedule and fees

After-school runs from 2:45 to 5:30 each school day. Students should be pre-registered to secure a spot. On-call participation in the after-school program is possible if the program has openings. Please send the school a text to ask about dropping in. Bananas tuition: \$19/day non-scholarship families, \$16/day scholarship families

Preregistration

Families may sign up for one to five days of after-school per week. Parents/guardians will receive a monthly invoice for their child's attendance in after-school care. After-school tuition is due upon receipt from our bookkeeper.

After school pick-up is at 5:30 sharp. Each additional 15 minutes the teacher waits with a child after 5:30, is \$10.00.

SOME NOTES ON THE SCHOOL DAY

FRIDAY FOLDER: Students will bring home a folder each Friday with announcements, updates, and the "Fabulous Five Questions of the Week". Your child is expected to spend time discussing his/her thoughts and answers to these five questions. Please sign this form and have your child return the form and folder to school on Monday morning.

HOMEWORK: Older students regularly have homework each week. Younger students have homework occasionally. **All Bridge School students are required to read for at least 20 minutes each evening. Older students should read at least 30 minutes each evening, depending on the teacher and the reading program.** This time is in addition to reading completed at school. It is helpful for students to have a regular time and place in which to work. It is also helpful to have a backpack for homework that comes to school and goes home each day.

If there is any confusion or problem about homework and/or expectations surrounding it, please ask the assigning teacher. Homework should not be a struggle between you and your child. If your child resists doing homework, please bring the issue to the assigning teacher and/or your child's Home Center teacher.

LIBRARY BOOKS: Children are allowed to check out books from the Bridge School library. Please check your child's room and around your house for Bridge School library books from time to time. Please return any books you find so that we do not have to buy replacements. If you would like to donate any hardcover books in good condition, please let us know.

WINTER SKATING: As soon as we can keep a rink frozen, we have skating at recess and other free times. We have some skates in the attic that can be borrowed, but parents are responsible for having the skates sharpened. All students are required to wear helmets while skating. Bridge School does not provide helmets. Please have your child bring a helmet if they wish to skate. Please feel welcome to use the rink outside of the school day! We always appreciate help snow-blowing the rink. If you are able to help, please speak to Jen.

BIRTHDAYS: Birthdays are very special at Bridge School and students are honored during Morning Meeting with the Bridge School traditional birthday song. Birthday kids may bring individually wrapped or store bought treats for their Home Center. Students, whose birthdays inconveniently fall outside the school calendar, may pick a date for a "School Birthday". Check with your child's Home Center teacher and ask to have it put it on the office calendar.

We ask that students that wish to exchange gifts with other students for any reason, to please do so off school property and outside of school hours unless it is a gift for each member of their Home Center or the whole school.

HEALTH

MEDICATIONS: We need written permission to give your child any medications, including acetaminophen and ibuprofen. All medications must be given to your child's Home Center Teacher to administer. This includes cough drops and homeopathic remedies. We are required to keep prescription medicine in its original, properly labeled, container. If you need an additional container, please ask your pharmacist.

CONJUNCTIVITIS (pink eye): Your child may not attend school until they have been diagnosed by a medical professional and treated with antibiotics for 24 hours.

FEVER (100.4 degrees F): A child must be fever-free for 24 hours, without the use of medication, before returning to school.

HEAD LICE: With the exception of the common cold, head lice infestation affects more school-age children than all other communicable diseases combined. If you find lice (adult) or nits (eggs) in your child's hair, please call your child's pediatrician to determine the most up-to-date treatment plan. If you decide to send your child to school, it is best that they wear a hat to keep their hair contained.

SEVERE COUGHING: Your child should not attend school until severe coughing disappears for 24 hours or otherwise indicated by a medical professional.

VOMITING: Children may not attend school until 24 hours after symptoms disappear.

LEAVING SCHOOL WHEN SICK: If your child gets sick during the school day, we will contact you for pick up. If we can't reach you, we will call your emergency contacts. **In an effort to reduce contagion, we ask that you do not bring your child to school in the afternoon if s/he were too sick to attend in the morning.**

TICKS: If we find a tick on your child during the school day, we will email and call to let you know. Please complete the Tick Removal Permissions form so we understand your preference for removing ticks.

COVID-19 HEALTH INFORMATION:

The health and safety of our community depends on the health and safety of individuals. Please keep your kiddo home if they are sick.

Individuals who meet any of the criteria below **may not enter** Bridge School *under any circumstance*.

****including essential personnel****

- Sore throat
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fever 100.4°F or higher
- Loss of taste or smell
- Muscle aches or shakes

- Recent contact with a COVID-19 infected person
- Recent exposure to large group(s) of people in tight quarters; recent out-of-state travel (must adhere to Vermont Department of Health quarantine guidelines)

VOLUNTEERING

There are many opportunities for volunteering outside of school. Reach out to Jen for more information! We encourage families to volunteer and you will receive a survey in the beginning of the school year with details of different opportunities.

FUNDRAISING

We expect everyone to help with fundraising. Bridge School has always strongly supported scholarship as an integral part of our philosophy. Following is a list of the major fundraising events of the year.

FUTURE FORTY CAMPAIGN

Bridge School is launching their capital campaign for our Future Forty! We will be in touch with opportunities to help volunteer for events this year.

AMAZON SMILE

Bridge School is registered in this program and if you shop on Amazon we will receive a donation equal to 5% of your purchase of most items. Go to smile.amazon.com and choose Bridge School before you start shopping. The site will remember your choice when you return for future purchases.

ANNUAL FUND LETTER

This is a broad appeal letter that goes out in the fall.

SOCIAL GATHERINGS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

Invitations to birthday parties, sleepovers, play dates, and similar gatherings should be kept as discreet and private as possible unless the whole school is invited. In consideration of other students' feelings, please NO invitations or gift-giving at school.

“What Grade are you in?”

We are a mixed-age school and the only grades we recognize are kindergarten and sixth grade. One big advantage to this is that students who might make the choice to spend an extra year are not “repeating a grade.” We do not use class grades as a means of academic, athletic or social grouping. Skill level, interest and learning style are our chosen methods for student grouping. We do often use the terms “Younger” and “Older” but not specific grades.

SPECIAL EVENTS

COVID UPDATE: All Special Events will be subject to cancellation or modification due to Covid restrictions at that time. We will be in touch with families about specific changes to events.

We have many wonderful events throughout the school year. See the school website and calendar for dates and times. Parking can get pretty tight at all-school events. Please park carefully, especially if you park on the side of Exchange Street. At evening events, you may use the Champlain Valley Orthopedics' parking lot across the street.

HALLOWEEN

This is a **BIG** holiday at Bridge School! The day begins with a parade at Morning Meeting, so students (and parents) are encouraged to come in costume. Please be sure to send a change of clothes. We enjoy a community feast on Halloween but please send a snack as usual. After lunch and D.E.A.R., teachers offer choices like “Oobleck”, “Games”, and “Wackiest Witch.” Children make their choices in advance.

7TH GRADE ALUMNI DAY

Alumni Day is when the students who graduated the previous June visit school for the day while their middle school has an in-service. They go to classes and get to be adored again by their former schoolmates.

THE BIG SHOW

After the Thanksgiving break, we start rehearsals for the BIG SHOW, written by the sixth grade class. We rehearse during Arts and Explorations times. Every child has a part in the show, with the sixth graders having larger parts with lines and solos, if they wish. On the same day as the evening performance, there is a matinee for small children and parents. We ask everyone to bring a finger dessert to share with the community after the evening performance. It is an exhilarating send-off for the two-week December break.

WINTER WEEK

The week before February Break is designated for special activities. Often parents teach special classes. Kim Moyer and kids make soup daily for the entire school. We also have a talent show, skating and sledding parties. Big fun!

COLLAR DAY

This day is set aside for teachers to give each child an award for excellence in some part of their school experience. The ceremony begins at 8:30 at Morning Meeting. We ask parents to stay for the entire ceremony. The name “Collar Day” comes from an old Elizabethan custom in which Queen Elizabeth I directed her court to dress up and then presented them with gifts and awards. We celebrate the day by getting dressed up and wearing family awards and medals. We encourage family members to give each other awards for excellence on this day.

CELEBRATIONS OF LEARNING

Throughout the year, students will frequently have information and projects to share with the community. Families will be contacted to attend all special events.

BEACH DAY

Beach Day is held during the last week of school. Everyone goes to Branbury State Park on Lake Dunmore for the day and we hire lifeguards. Home Center teachers will ask you to provide part of the Home Center lunch. Send a labeled towel, swimsuit and sunscreen. Parents are invited and may bring younger sibs along.

GRADUATION

Our graduation celebration is the night before the last day of school in June. This is a whole school event. All students and families are invited and encouraged to participate. Bridge School graduation is very special! Our sixth graders perform and are given their diplomas. We ask everybody to bring a finger food to share with the community. You won't want to miss it.

BRIDGE SCHOOL COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

Bridge School believes that the social and emotional growth of children is equally as important as the academic growth. To enact this belief, Self-Control, Community Respect, Conflict Resolution and Logical Consequence are the essential values of our Community Expectations and social and emotional learning philosophy. Teachers and students collaboratively create a respectful and positive learning environment together that is both physically and emotionally safe for all. Teachers model, mentor, and explicitly teach the skills for working and learning cooperatively with others.

COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

In order to keep our community safe, all students and adults must follow these Community Expectations:

1. Keep everyone safe and healthy.

- Show respect and kindness with how you move and use your body.
- Play in a way that keeps everyone safe and healthy.
- Walk inside at all times.
- Wait for a teacher before going into a room.
- Only go into rooms where the lights are on.
- Stay within the playground boundaries.
- Play without the use of violence or weapons.
- Wash hands thoroughly between all activities
- Wear a mask inside and outside when you can't remain socially distant.

2. Earn and give respect through your words and actions.

- Show respect and kindness with the words you use and the actions you take.
- Speak to all peers as you would want to be spoken to.
- Speak to all adults as you would want to be spoken to.

3. Be a respectful learner.

- Be respectful of quiet attention signals.
- Treat the classroom, playground and shared community materials with respect.
- Respond to requests from an adult.

4. Create our Caring Community.

- Do your best and try your hardest at all times—both in the classroom and on the playground.
- Practice kindness.
- Reach out to all members of the community and get to know them.

SCHOOLWIDE RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS

PHYSICAL HURTING

If a child in the Younger Home Center hits or physically hurts another child, they are given a warning. If a student is new to school, they also get a warning, irrespective of age. When a child gets a warning, their Home Center teacher or Co-Director contacts the student's family to describe what happened and let the family know their child has received a warning. (The Home Center teacher or the Co-Director will also contact the family of a child who has been hurt by another child.) If that child hits or hurts a child again in the same academic year, the Home Center teacher will send the child home for the remainder of the day. If the conflict occurs after D.E.A.R. time, the Home Center teacher will ask the family to keep the child home for the following day of school. The Home Center Teachers track these incidents. If a pattern forms, they will call for a meeting with a student's family members to help form a behavior plan that will lead to positive outcomes for all of the people involved.

Students in the Older Home Centers do not get warnings for hurting other students. The Home Center teacher will send them home if they hit or hurt another child. As children get older the expectation is that they will not hurt others. If the issue occurs after D.E.A.R. time the student will be asked to stay home for the following day.

HURTING WITH WORDS

Hurting another student with words, either intentionally or unintentionally, is treated with the same degree of seriousness as hurting physically. If a student maliciously hurts another student with words, the protocol of warnings and being sent home is followed.

EXTREME AND / OR REPEATED NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR

Students who do not have a developmentally appropriate level of self-control may be asked to leave the school for a short period of time as a suspension. If the child's behaviors are extreme and dangerous to the community, a student may be asked to leave the school permanently, as a dismissal. It is possible for a student to return after receiving an evaluation and screening from a professional child psychologist that has met with the child and communicated with Bridge School teachers to determine that the child is ready to transition back to school.

FAMILY SUPPORT -- How can families support a child who has received a warning or been sent home for hurting another person?

- It is important to be calm and matter of fact about behavioral consequences. Let your child know that it is important to you that you understand what happened and show them that you care about the problem that they are facing.
- If a situation feels uncomfortable and you want to talk more with the Home Center teacher, please don't hesitate to request a meeting.
- Some families make the choice to take away children's privileges at home as a result of in-school behavior problems. Please let your HC teacher know if this is the case because it could be a factor in how we work together as a team to support your child in developing a positive outcome to stressful situations.
- Please reach out to us and share any concerns and questions you have. We look forward to working with you.

Photo & Media

Bridge School regularly shares photos of life at school on our website, social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Homeroom), and with the local papers. We always post responsibly and respectfully.

- No picture posted will be done so with the intent of ridiculing, harassing, or embarrassing a child.
- No picture will be tagged by any Bridge School employee

- Student and family names, addresses, phone numbers or other personal information will never be given without consent from parents (including local print media)
- Pictures will be removed from social media by the request of parents or students.
- Comments made on social media sites that are not in the spirit of Bridge School's mission will be removed.
- We promise to:
 - Intentionally and minfully think about how each post represents our school, our students, and our families.
 - Respect concerns of students and families.
 - Monitor comments.
Correct mistakes.
- We will not post:
 - Negative comments or offensive jokes.
 - Compromising or questionable pictures.

POLICIES

The following policies are on file at the front desk. Please ask Jen if you wish to see them.

Harassment, Hazing and Bullying Policy and Procedures

Weapons Policy

Restraint and Seclusion in Schools (Rule 4500)

Discipline Policy