



Schalmont

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Student Handbook 2026-2027



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Welcome to Schalmont Middle School

At Schalmont Middle School, we are committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and engaging learning environment where all students are encouraged to explore their interests, build meaningful relationships, and grow into responsible, respectful, and confident citizens.

Our academic program is designed to challenge and inspire students through a rigorous and well-rounded curriculum that includes core subjects, enrichment opportunities, and special area classes such as music, art, technology, FACS, Spanish and physical education. We emphasize critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity to prepare students for success in high school and beyond.

Student support is at the heart of our mission. Through strong teacher-student connections, counseling services, and social-emotional learning, we ensure that each child is supported both academically and personally. Our team-based approach allows educators to work closely together to monitor student progress and respond to individual needs effectively.

We believe in the importance of nurturing the whole child. Schalmont Middle School is a place where students not only strive for academic excellence but also grow in character, develop leadership skills, and develop a love for lifelong learning.

School Contacts & Student Assistance

Schalmont Middle School

2 Sabre Drive
Schenectady, NY 12306
518-355-6110

Middle School Leadership Team

Matthew Heckman, Executive Principal Grades 5-12

mheckman@schalmont.net

Meghan Holdsworth, Assistant Principal

mholdsworth@schalmont.net

Academic & Instructional Support Services

Armine Gonzalez, Director of Academic and Instructional Support Services

agonzalez@schalmont.net

Alisa Balestrino, Assistant Principal for K-12 Student Support Services

abalestrino@schalmont.net

Physical Education, Health & Athletics

Kathleen Russell, Director of PE, Health & Athletics

krussell@schalmont.net

Department Coordinators

Kate Sinnott, English 6-8

ksinnot@schalmont.net

Jennifer Pierce, Math 6-8

jpierce@schalmont.net

Michael Christy, Music K-12

mchristy@schalmont.net

Michael DiCocco, Social Studies 6-8

mdicocco@schalmont.net

LuAnn Duxbury, Science 6-8

lduxbury@schalmont.net

Allison Weber, Spanish 7-12

aweber@schalmont.net

Related Services

Student Support Team

The Student Support Team at Schalmont Middle School is a multidisciplinary group of professionals dedicated to promoting the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral success of all students. The team meets regularly to identify students who may be experiencing challenges and collaboratively develops strategies and interventions to support their growth and success.

School Counseling Office

Dayna D'Ambrosio, Administrative Assistant

ddambrosio@schalmont.net

518-355-6255

School Counselors

Christina Romano (Last Names A-L, Grades 6-8)

cromano@schalmont.net

518-355-6255 ext. 2065

Lyndsay Clark (Last Names M-Z, Grades 6-8)

lclark@schalmont.net

518-355-6255 ext. 2067

The School Counselors at Schalmont Middle School play a vital role in supporting the academic, social, and emotional development of all students. As trusted members of the school community, counselors serve as advocates for students and work collaboratively with families, teachers, and administrators to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Middle School counselors assist students in three key areas:

- **Academic Development:**
Counselors help students set goals, develop effective study habits, and navigate academic challenges. They also monitor progress and provide support for students who may need additional resources or interventions.
- **Social and Emotional Development:**
Through individual counseling, group sessions, and school-wide initiatives, counselors help students build self-awareness, develop healthy relationships, resolve conflicts, and strengthen coping skills. They also support students in managing stress, peer pressure, and the challenges of adolescence.
- **College and Career Readiness:**
While future planning begins in the early grades, Middle School counselors introduce students to career exploration activities, goal-setting, and decision-making skills that lay the foundation for high school and beyond.

School Social Workers

Alyssa Lupinski (Grade 5)

alupinski@schalmont.net

Stephanie Carter (Grades 6-8)

scarter@schalmont.net

Our School Social Workers are dedicated to supporting the emotional well-being and overall success of students and their families. They are available to assist with issues that may interfere with a student's ability to learn and thrive in school.

Social workers provide confidential services, which may include individual or group support, crisis intervention, and coordination with school staff. They also offer referrals to community-based agencies and resources based on the needs and preferences of families.

Our school social workers may be reached by contacting the Counseling Office at 518-355-6255.

School Psychologist

Rebecca Danforth

rdanforth@schalmont.net

518-355-6255

The School Psychologist at Schalmont Middle School supports students and families by addressing academic, behavioral, and emotional challenges that may interfere with a student's ability to succeed in school.

Services may include individual consultation, participation in student support planning, and conducting educational evaluations, to assess a student's learning strengths and needs. The school psychologist works closely with teachers, counselors, administrators, and families to develop strategies that promote student growth and well-being.

Health Office

Katlyn Maxon, RN, School Nurse

kmaxon@schalmont.net

518-355-6255 ext. 2062

The Health Office plays a vital role in supporting the health, safety, and well-being of all students.

Services provided by the Health Office include:

- Attending to the daily medical needs of students
- Conducting vision, hearing, and scoliosis screenings
- Administering prescription medications in accordance with medical guidelines
- Maintaining up-to-date student medical records and documentation

To ensure prompt communication in the event of an emergency:

- Families must provide current work phone numbers or the phone number of a close relative if both parents work.
- An emergency contact card must be completed and returned to the nurse at the start of each school year.

Keeping this information up to date is essential to maintaining student safety and effective care during the school day.

Illness

If a student becomes ill at school they should report to the Health Office immediately after obtaining permission from the staff member in charge. When students arrive at the nurse's office they must sign in the log book.

Medication

Students who are required to take any type of medication during school hours must report this to the Health Office with a written note from a parent or guardian. The note should include specific details about the medication and its use.

This policy is mandated by New York State Education Law and applies to all medications, including over-the-counter items such as aspirin, vitamins, and cough medicine.

All medications must be stored in the Health Office and will be administered under the supervision of the school nurse.

If you have any questions regarding medications in school, please contact the school nurse.

Immunization Policy

New students and transfer students are required by state law to produce evidence of immunization for the following diseases: measles, rubella (German or 3 day measles), polio, diphtheria and mumps. They will not be admitted to school until such evidence is produced.

Accidents

All injuries to students while at school must be reported to the Health Office as soon as possible after the occurrence. The school nurse will inspect the injury and take the necessary steps, including the filing of an accident report. In emergencies, Rotterdam ambulance service will be called and the parent will be notified along with the family physician, if necessary.

Educational Program Overview

Grade Level Framework

At Schalmont Middle School, we provide a rigorous and well-rounded curriculum designed to challenge students academically while nurturing their personal growth. Our courses span core subjects such as English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies, alongside a wide variety of electives in areas like art, music, health, family and consumer sciences, Spanish, technology, and physical education. Students are encouraged to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills, while also exploring their individual interests and passions. We strive to create an environment that promotes curiosity, fosters creativity, and prepares students for success in high school and beyond.

Grade 5 Academic Overview

Welcome to Grade 5 at Schalmont Middle School. Our fifth-grade program provides students with a strong academic foundation while supporting their social and emotional growth during the important transition into Middle School.

Each student is assigned to a Grade 5 classroom teacher, similar to the structure in elementary school. Core academic instruction, including English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, is delivered by the classroom teacher in a consistent, supportive environment. In addition to their core subjects, students also participate in a variety of special area classes designed to enrich their educational experience.

Grade 5 English Language Arts (ELA)

- Emphasis on reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and written expression.
- Use of high-interest fiction and nonfiction texts.
- Writing units include narrative, opinion, and informational pieces.
- Guided reading groups and independent reading time promote literacy development.
- Use of the Arts and Letters literacy series and curriculum

Grade 5 Mathematics

- Focus on developing number sense, fluency with operations, and problem-solving strategies.
- Topics include place value, multi-digit multiplication and division, fractions, and decimals.
- Hands-on activities and math games are used to reinforce conceptual understanding.

Grade 5 Social Studies

- Curriculum centers on early American history, geography, and civics.
- Units explore Native American cultures, early explorers, colonial America, and government foundations.
- Students engage in map work, projects, and group discussions to deepen understanding.

Grade 5 Science

- Emphasis on inquiry, experimentation, and scientific thinking.
- Topics include life science, physical science, and weather and climate.
- Students participate in hands-on lessons, STEM activities, and collaborative projects.

Grade 5 Specials Area Classes

- Students attend rotating special area classes including:
Art, Music, Physical Education and Library.
- Students also have the opportunity to begin playing an instrument in the Grade 5 Band or participating in the Chorus.

Grade 6 Academic Overview

Welcome to Grade 6 at Schalmont Middle School. Grade 6 marks an exciting step in the Middle School journey as students begin to experience more academic independence, personal responsibility, and expanded learning opportunities. Our sixth-grade program is designed to challenge students academically while providing the social-emotional support they need to thrive during early adolescence.

Instructional Model

Students in Grade 6 follow a team-based model, receiving instruction from two core teachers who specialize in the major academic subjects (Math, Science, SS and Math). This model provides a supportive transition from the self-contained classrooms of elementary school to the departmental structure used in upper grades. It allows students to build meaningful relationships with teachers while developing independence and organizational skills within a structured, nurturing environment.

Students rotate between classes for:

- English Language Arts (ELA)
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Applications of Writing
- Special Area Classes
 - Art
 - Music Education (General Music; Band; or Chorus option)
 - Physical Education
 - Technology Education

Grades 7 & 8 Academic Overview

Schalmont Middle School's Grades 7 and 8 program is designed to support the academic, social, and emotional development of students as they prepare for the transition to high school. Our school utilizes a team-based instructional model to foster a sense of community, collaboration, and consistency in students' daily experiences.

Each grade is divided into interdisciplinary teams consisting of core subject teachers in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. This structure allows teachers to collaborate closely on curriculum planning, student progress, and cross-curricular connections, while providing students with a smaller learning community within the larger school environment. The teaming model enhances communication among staff and families and supports more personalized learning and support for each student.

In addition to core academic subjects, students in Grades 7 and 8 participate in a robust selection of special area classes that promote creativity, exploration, and the development of diverse skills. These include:

- Art Education
- Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS)
- Health Education
- Music Education (Band, Chorus, General Music)
- Physical Education
- Spanish
- Technology Education

These special area classes are integral to the Middle School experience, encouraging students to explore interests, develop talents, and gain important life and career skills.

Schalmont's Grades 7 and 8 program also places a strong emphasis on character development, responsible citizenship, and student wellness, creating a well-rounded and supportive environment that prepares students for the challenges and opportunities of high school and beyond.

Overview of Academic Departments - Grades 6-8

Schalmont Middle School offers a comprehensive and well-structured academic program designed to meet the needs of young adolescents through rigorous instruction, engaging curriculum, and strong support systems. The school's academic departments work collaboratively to ensure students are challenged academically while also being supported socially and emotionally

English: Grades 6-8

The Language Arts are critical in developing proficient readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and learners for school and in the real world. The goal of Schalmont's English Language Arts program is to support the K-12 New York State Next Generation Standards in English Language Arts and develop strong and literate students who are prepared for the 21st century demands. We recognize that it is critical that students see themselves as readers and writers and build literacy confidence as they progress through our program.

Schalmont's Middle School English Language Arts program builds on skills and strategies learned at the elementary level and focuses on building reading and writing confidence and skills as students face more challenging demands in reading and writing and New York State ELA assessments. Students continue to engage in the writing process, employ and develop new reading strategies, and learn how language usage makes them effective communicators. At this level, we pay special attention to purpose and audience, and create good revising and editing habits, including correct use of spelling, grammar, and the conventions of Standard English.

Mathematics: Grades 6-8

The Middle School Math program is designed to develop students' mathematical understanding, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking abilities as they transition from concrete arithmetic to more abstract reasoning. Our curriculum is aligned with the New York State Next Generation Mathematics Learning Standards and prepares students for success in high school mathematics.

Mathematics: Grade 6

In Grade 6, instructional time will focus on four critical areas: (1) connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems; (2)

completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers; (3) writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; and (4) developing understanding of statistical thinking.

Mathematics: Grade 7

In Grade 7, instructional time will focus on four critical areas: (1) developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships; (2) developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations; (3) solving problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions, and working with two- and three-dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume; and (4) drawing inferences about populations based on samples.

Mathematics: Grade 8

In Grade 8, instructional time will focus on three critical areas: (1) formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; (2) grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; (3) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem.

Social Studies: Grades 6-8

Middle School social studies focuses on helping students understand the world around them, its history, geography, and the systems that govern societies. The curriculum typically includes a variety of subjects related to history, government, economics, and geography. Middle School social studies aims to foster an understanding of the world by exploring past and present events, cultures, and systems, helping students become informed citizens capable of thinking critically about the challenges and opportunities facing their communities and the world.

Social Studies: Grade 6

Grade 6 Social Studies is based on the geography and history of the Eastern Hemisphere, including the development of cultures, civilizations, and empires; interactions between societies; and the comparison of trends in government and economics. It also incorporates some elements of other social sciences. The course begins with an examination of the Eastern Hemisphere today, using geographic skills. This provides the foundation for making connections between the past and the present throughout the course. The remainder of the course is divided into seven Key Ideas that cover a time span from prehistory into the 1300s. Students are provided the opportunity to explore belief systems across time and to examine the foundations of democracy.

Social Studies: Grade 7

Grade 7 Social Studies is arranged chronologically and incorporates geography as well as economic, social, and political trends. The course content is divided into eight Key Ideas, tracing the human experience in the United States from preColumbian times until the Civil War, with a focus on the people, events, and places in New York State as applicable.

Social Studies: Grade 8

Grade 8 Social Studies is arranged chronologically, beginning with Reconstruction and ending at the present, and incorporates geography as well as economic, social and political trends. The course content

is divided into nine Key Ideas; the first seven trace the human experience in the United States from Reconstruction to the end of World War II. The last three Key Ideas examine different themes in United States and New York State history from the post-War period up to the present day, which provides the opportunity to explore contemporary issues.

Science: Grades 6 - 8

Middle School science typically covers a broad range of topics, introducing students to foundational concepts across various scientific disciplines including Biology, Physics, Earth and Space Science, and Scientific Method and Inquiry. The Middle School science curriculum encourages curiosity, critical thinking, and hands-on experiments to help students better understand the world around them. It's a mix of theoretical knowledge and practical application to build a solid foundation for higher-level science courses.

Physical Science: Grade 6

The Universe, Earth and Solar System
The History of the Earth with its Materials and Systems
Plate Tectonics and the Role of Water in Earth's Surface Processes
Weather, Climate and Global Climate Change
Biogeology with Human Impacts on Earth Systems
Natural Resources, Hazards and Biogeology

Life Science: Grade 7

Structure and Function (Cells)
Growth and development of Organisms and Energy flow
Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems
Ecosystem Matter and Energy, Transfer and Dynamics, Social interactions, Group Dynamics
Inheritance and Variation of Traits
Natural Selection, Adaptation
Biodiversity and Humans

Physical Science: Grade 8

Structure and Property of Matter
Chemical Reactions and Nuclear Processes
Conservation of Energy and energy transfer
Energy in Chemical Processes
Forces and Motion
Energy in Chemical Properties and Everyday Life
Wave Properties
Electromagnetic Radiation

Special Area Subjects

Special area classes play a vital role in providing a well-rounded Middle School education. These subjects allow students to explore interests and talents beyond the core academic curriculum, build essential life and career skills, and develop a deeper appreciation for the arts, technology, and wellness.

Art Education

Visual Art is a New York State mandated class for all grades 5-8 students. The curriculum used in these classes aligns with the state standards per grade level and increases in rigor as students progress through their Middle School years. In these classes, students are exposed to a variety of art making materials including but not limited to chalk/oil pastel, tempera/acrylic paint, clay, paper sculpture, printmaking inks and digital art making platforms. As reference and project inspiration, students will also view an assortment of artworks and art forms made in various places around the world and times throughout history from prehistoric cave painting through contemporary art. All project work is graded with rubrics that the students help design, based on the categories of Elements & Principles of Art/Technique Usage, Creativity & Originality, Effort & Perseverance, Craftsmanship, and Attitude & Participation.

Family and Consumer Sciences

Family and Consumer Sciences at the Middle School level, offered to students in grades 7 through 8, focuses on Home and Career Skills. These courses are designed to help adolescents live and thrive in a society of constant change. We prepare them to meet their present and future responsibilities as family members, consumers, home managers and wage earners. Specific topics that are covered in these courses include; Nutrition, Food Preparation, Family, Parenting and Child Development, Textiles, Laundry, Community Service, Career Building, Financial Management, Time Management, Self-awareness, Stress Management and Communication Skills. These skills are learned at the basic level to be used as scaffolding for the High School Family and Consumer Sciences courses.

Health Education

The Middle School Health program is designed to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to make informed decisions about their physical, emotional, and social well-being. Health education is a critical component of the Middle School curriculum, promoting lifelong wellness and supporting students during the significant developmental changes of adolescence.

Curriculum Focus Areas

1. Personal Health and Wellness
2. Mental and Emotional Health
3. Healthy Relationships and Communication
4. Substance Abuse Prevention
5. Human Growth and Development
6. Safety and Injury Prevention

Students participate in the Middle School Health Education program in grades 6 and 8.

Music Education

Schalmont Middle School offers a dynamic and engaging music education program that supports the artistic growth, creativity, and musical literacy of all students. The program is designed to provide a balance of performance-based and general music experiences, allowing students to explore and develop their musical talents in a supportive and collaborative environment.

Performance Ensembles

Students in Grades 5 through 8 have the opportunity to participate in a variety of ensemble groups, including:

- **Band** - Open to students who play woodwind, brass, or percussion instruments. Students learn ensemble techniques, instrumental skills, and perform at concerts and school events.
- **Chorus** - Students develop vocal technique, sight-singing skills, and choral literacy while performing in group settings. Chorus fosters confidence, teamwork, and expressive performance.

General Music

Students also participate in general music classes, where they explore the fundamentals of music theory, history, composition, and appreciation. Students learn about a wide range of musical styles and cultures, helping to broaden their understanding and connection to music as both an art form and a cultural experience. General music is available to students in grades 5 through 8.

Songwriters Workshop

Songwriters Workshop invites students to explore the art of songwriting through lyric writing, melody creation, and musical arrangement. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced musician, you'll learn the fundamentals of song structure, rhythm, and harmony while developing your own unique style. Students will have opportunities to collaborate, perform, and receive feedback in a supportive and inspiring environment. No prior experience required, just a passion for music and a desire to express yourself. This course is available to grade 8 students.

The Schalmont Middle School music program plays a vital role in the overall educational experience, helping students build discipline, teamwork, and a sense of accomplishment while discovering their own musical potential.

Physical Education

Middle School Physical Education (PE) is a program designed to help students develop physical fitness, learn sportsmanship, and gain knowledge about healthy lifestyles. The curriculum typically includes a mix of team sports, individual activities, fitness exercises, and lessons on the importance of physical health. PE classes often focus on:

1. **Skill Development:** Students are introduced to a variety of sports, such as basketball, soccer, volleyball, and track, and work on improving skills in these activities.
2. **Physical Fitness:** There are exercises to enhance strength, flexibility, endurance, and overall fitness, including warm-ups, cardio exercises, and strength training.
3. **Teamwork and Sportsmanship:** Students learn how to work in teams, communicate effectively, and display respect and fairness toward others in competitive environments.
4. **Fun and Engagement:** Games and activities are structured to keep students engaged and excited about being active, ensuring they have fun while learning.

Overall, Middle School PE is meant to foster a love for physical activity, teach essential life skills, and promote lifelong fitness habits. All students in grade 5 through 8 participate in PE.

Spanish

The Middle School Spanish program, offered in grades 7 and 8, introduces students to the fundamentals of the Spanish language while fostering an appreciation for Hispanic cultures around the world. Through engaging activities, students develop skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Spanish. Emphasis is placed on building basic vocabulary, conversational phrases, and cultural understanding through interactive lessons, projects, music, and games. The program lays a strong foundation for continued language study in high school and encourages students to become confident, culturally aware global citizens.

Technology Education

Middle School Technology Education combines hands-on building with modern computer design to give students a well-rounded introduction to the world of technology and engineering. Students learn to work safely with tools and materials as they design and build projects using wood, basic mechanical systems, and other construction techniques. At the same time, they explore digital tools such as computer design software to create precise plans and 3D models of their work. The courses emphasize creativity, problem-solving, and technical skills while helping students understand the connection between design, construction, and real-world applications. The blend of manual and digital skills prepares students for future success in STEM and trade-related fields as they move into high school. Students in grades 6 through 8 participate in the Technology Education courses.

Library Media

Library Media Specialist: Mr. Bradt

The Schalmont Middle School Library is a vibrant hub of learning, exploration, and creativity. It provides students with access to a wide range of print and digital resources to support academic learning and foster a love of reading.

The library offers:

- A diverse collection of fiction and non-fiction books
- Research tools and databases to support classroom projects
- Digital literacy instruction, including safe and responsible internet use
- A welcoming space for reading, studying, and collaboration

Our library media specialist works closely with teachers to integrate information literacy into the curriculum and to encourage students to become critical thinkers, effective researchers, and lifelong learners.

Whether students are looking for their next great read, working on a project, or exploring new ideas, the library is a supportive and resource-rich environment designed to help them succeed.

Academic Acceleration

The purpose of academic acceleration at the Middle School level is to provide students with appropriate learning opportunities that match their demonstrated readiness, ability, and motivation. Acceleration may include grade-level advancement, subject-specific acceleration, or enrollment in advanced coursework. The goal is to ensure each student is both challenged and supported in their learning.

Eligibility and Consideration Criteria:

- Consistently high academic performance in the subject area(s) considered for acceleration
- Teacher recommendations based on classroom performance, work habits, and maturity
- Standardized test scores or other assessment data indicating above-grade-level proficiency
- Demonstrated motivation, independence, and strong work ethic
- Parental support and student interest in pursuing advanced work

Opportunities for academic acceleration typically begin in seventh grade and may include subject specific advancement or enrollment in higher level courses. Students who are interested in acceleration should speak with their teacher or school counselor for more information about eligibility, available options, and the placement process.

Academic Intervention Services

Academic Intervention Services (AIS) in Math and English are designed to support Middle School students who are at risk of not meeting grade-level learning standards. These services provide targeted instruction to help students build essential skills, improve academic performance, and gain confidence in their learning.

Students may receive Academic Intervention Services (AIS) based on classroom performance, teacher recommendation, and/or results from state or local assessments. One key tool used in this process is the STAR Assessment, a computer-adaptive test that measures student achievement and growth in reading and math. Administered schoolwide up to three times per year, STAR provides valuable data that helps teachers identify each student's strengths and determine areas in need of additional support through AIS.

School Procedures & Helpful Information**Home to School Communication**

When concerns arise with classroom situations, families are encouraged to follow the progression of contact below.

1. Classroom Teacher or School Counselor
2. Assistant Principal
3. Building Principal
4. Superintendent of Schools

- **Classroom Teacher**

If there is a concern about something occurring in the classroom, parents/guardians should first contact the classroom teacher. Direct communication at this level is often the most effective way to resolve questions or issues.

- **School Counselor**

If the concern involves a student's social-emotional well-being, academic progress, or peer relationships, parents/guardians are encouraged to reach out to the school counselor. Counselors work closely with students, families, and teachers to provide support and help address individual student needs.

- **Building Administration**

For concerns related to general school operations, policies, or if a classroom concern is not resolved after speaking with the teacher, parents/guardians should contact the Assistant Principal. If additional support is needed, the next step is to reach out to the Building Principal.

- **Superintendent of Schools**

If the concern involves broader district operations, District policy, or has not been resolved satisfactorily after communication with the teacher and building administration, families should contact the Superintendent's Office.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences may be scheduled throughout the school year to discuss student progress. Conferences can be requested by either the teacher or the parent/guardian.

If parents wish to arrange a conference, they should contact the School Counseling Office at 518-355-6255.

High Honor Roll and Honor Roll

Students are recognized for academic achievement on a quarterly basis through the High Honor Roll and Honor Roll distinctions.

Once quarter grades are finalized, students' overall quarter averages are used to determine their Honor Roll status.

- **High Honor Roll:** Awarded to students with a quarterly average of 92 - 100%
- **Honor Roll:** Awarded to students with a quarterly average of 88 - 91.9%

These distinctions celebrate consistent academic effort and achievement throughout each marking period.

Arrival Procedures

Bus Drop-Off

Buses will drop students off in the front loop at 7:25 a.m., with students entering the designated student entrance.

Parent Drop-Off

Before 7:30 a.m. - Parents may drop students off in the staff parking lot, entering through the LGI doors beginning at 7:15 a.m.

After 7:30 a.m. - Parents may begin dropping students off in the front loop.

Before School Locations

Grade 5 students enter the building and wait in Cafeteria A until 7:35 a.m.

Grade 6 students enter the building and wait in the LGI until 7:35 a.m.

Breakfast is available to all students in Cafeteria B until 7:35 a.m. Students should report to the cafeteria promptly upon arriving to school.

Dismissal Procedures

Grade 5 dismissal begins at 2:10 p.m.

Grades 6 - 8 dismissal begins at 2:13 p.m.

Parent Pick-Up

All students being picked up by a parent/guardian will exit through the LGI doors. Parents should use the staff parking lot for student pick-up. Please follow posted signage and staff directions to ensure a safe and efficient dismissal process.

Early Dismissal from School

If a student needs to be dismissed early from school, a written note or phone call from a parent or guardian is required. The note should include the student's name, reason for early dismissal, and the time of pickup.

Upon arrival, the parent/guardian must report to the main office to sign the student out. For safety reasons, students will only be released to individuals listed on the student's emergency contact list. Photo identification is required.

To minimize disruptions to instruction, we ask that early dismissals occur only when absolutely necessary.

Morning Announcements

Each morning at 7:40 a.m., the Pledge of Allegiance is recited, followed by the daily announcements.

- All students are expected to show proper respect during the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Students who choose not to participate in the Pledge must remain seated and silent as a sign of respect.
- If a student is walking in the hallway during the Pledge of Allegiance, they are expected to pause and stand quietly until the pledge is completed.
- During announcements, all students must remain quiet and seated to ensure important information is heard and understood.

Submitting Announcements

Any announcements must be submitted to the Main Office no later than the day before they are to be read.

Daily Schedule

Homeroom begins at 7:40 a.m. The warning bell rings at 7:38 a.m., signaling that students should be on their way to their homeroom location.

Classes meet daily and follow a four-day rotation cycle (A, B, C, D). Some classes, such as Physical Education, special area classes, study halls, and Academic Intervention Services (AIS), may meet every other day, depending on the schedule.

At the conclusion of the school day, all students are expected to leave the building promptly, unless they are:

- Staying for after-school help with a teacher,
- Participating in a club or supervised activity, or
- Attending athletic practices or games (grades 7 and 8 only)

Students are not permitted to remain in the building after regular school hours unless they are under the direct supervision of a staff member or coach and their presence has been scheduled and approved.

Middle School students are not permitted in the High School unless they are participating in a school activity and being supervised by a staff member or coach.

Passing Between Classes

Students are given three minutes to transition between classes. This allows sufficient time to move from room to room without running.

During passing time:

- Students are expected to walk promptly and safely through the corridors.
- Horseplay, pushing, shoving, and yelling are strictly prohibited.
- Students must cooperate with teachers and hall monitors who are supervising hallway movement.
- All movement between classes should take place within designated hallways only.
- Students should be cautious when opening lockers, ensuring they do not obstruct others in passing.
- Sitting on the floor is not permitted before school or between periods.

Additionally, loitering on landings or stairwells is a safety hazard and is not allowed at any time.

Breakfast and Lunch Program

All students receive free breakfast and lunch through the district's meal program.

- Breakfast is available to students before school from 7:25 a.m. to 7:35 a.m.
- There are three designated lunch periods: Period 5, 6 and 7.

Additional food and drink items beyond the standard breakfast and lunch offerings are available for purchase.

Bus Notes

If you are sending your child to school with a note about a bus change please note the address to which they are going along with the bus route if possible. This note should go to Mrs. D'Ambrosio in the school counseling office.

Late Buses

Late buses are available for all students on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. To board a late bus, students must present an official late bus pass signed by a teacher/advisor/coach. This pass must be given to the bus driver upon boarding the bus.

Late buses are intended for students participating in supervised after-school activities or receiving extra help from a teacher.

After School Time

Remaining after school is permitted only for specific designated purposes, such as academic support, extracurricular activities, or athletic participation. For students in grades 5 - 8, middle school activities are hosted inside the middle school building. The only exception is for athletic practices or meetings that

require students to go to the high school; **middle school students should not be present at the high school after school for any other reason.**

Students are highly encouraged to take advantage of the extra help sessions offered by teachers on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays between 2:30 and 3:30 P.M. Attendance during these times may also be requested by a teacher. If a student is mandated to attend, they are required to remain under that teacher's direct supervision for the entire duration of the session.

Prior to leaving the building, any student who plans to ride the late bus must obtain a valid late bus pass from their teacher.

Extracurricular Activities, Clubs and Intramurals

Students in grades 5 - 8 may participate in a wide variety of extracurricular activities. Club advisors and supervisors determine meeting times, locations, and planned activities for each group. Participation in extracurricular activities, clubs, and intramural sports requires good academic, attendance, and behavioral standing. Students become ineligible if they are failing two or more classes, have more than five unexcused absences or tardies to school, have received ISS or OSS disciplinary action, or have demonstrated recurring behavioral concerns during class time or throughout the school. Students may implement a recovery plan (which may include mandatory academic or behavioral support during study hall, lunch, or after school) to improve their performance and regain eligibility.

Field Trips

Students may have the opportunity to participate in field trips planned by their teachers or team. Participation in field trips requires students to maintain good academic, attendance, and behavioral standing. To be eligible, students must meet the following criteria:

- No more than three office referrals
- No in-school (ISS) or out-of-school (OSS) suspensions
- Minimal unexcused tardies or absences
- May not be failing more than two full year classes

Students who do not meet these criteria may have their field trip privileges reconsidered or revoked. Students may implement a recovery plan (which may include mandatory academic or behavioral support during study hall, lunch, or after school) to improve their performance and regain eligibility.

Lockers

Each student is assigned a locker based on their homeroom location.

Students are responsible for the care and condition of their assigned locker.

Important Notes

- All lockers remain the property of the school, and school authorities reserve the right to search any locker when there is sufficient cause.
- Students should take special care to protect their personal belongings and valuables. Money and valuables should never be left unattended in lockers, desks, or any other unsecured location.

Liability

The school district does not assume responsibility for personal items or school property borrowed by students. The responsibility for all belongings lies solely with the student.

Lost and Found

Lost items are placed in the Lost and Found located in the cafeteria lobby.

For electronic devices or items of greater value, please check with the Main Office, where such items are securely stored.

School Closings and Delays

In the event of a school closing or delay due to inclement weather or other emergencies, families will receive a text and message through our ParentSquare system. Information is also posted to our social media accounts, website and local media stations.

Please note: When schools are closed or dismissed early due to weather or emergencies, all after-school and evening activities are canceled.

Attendance and Student Engagement**Importance of Regular Attendance**

Regular school attendance is a vital part of a student's academic success. The educational process relies on continuity of instruction and active participation in the classroom.

The interaction between students and teachers during class time is an essential component of learning that cannot be replicated through make-up work alone.

There is a strong correlation between consistent attendance, active parental involvement, and overall academic achievement.

These beliefs support the need for daily attendance and form the foundation of the district's compulsory attendance policy.

Absences from the regular school day, when unexcused, may be considered insubordination and may result in disciplinary action, in accordance with district policy and Section 3214 of New York State Education Law.

Students who are legally (excused) absent will be permitted to make up missed classwork, written assignments, quizzes, tests, and other coursework.

Excused Absences

In accordance with New York State Education Department guidelines, the following reasons are considered **excused absences** from school:

- Personal illness
- Illness or death in the family
- Religious observance
- Required court appearances
- Approved college visits (typically for high school students)

- Quarantine
- Medical or dental appointments (with documentation)
- Approved cooperative work programs
- Military obligations
- School-sponsored activities (athletics, field trips)
- Impassable roads or weather-related conditions

All other absences, including family vacations, are considered **unexcused** unless approved by the building principal. Parents/guardians must provide a written note or electronic communication stating the reason for the absence within a reasonable timeframe.

Students missing school due to an unexcused absence may not be allowed to complete missing assignments, including classroom assessments.

Daily Attendance

Attendance is recorded electronically by classroom teachers on a period-by-period basis.

Students must report to their scheduled class first to be marked present before leaving for any other location (e.g., music lessons, nurse, main office, etc.).

If a student is marked absent and confirmed to be absent from school, an automated notification will be sent to the student's home by 11:00 a.m. via electronic communication (e.g., robo call).

The building principal or designee will investigate the reason for any student absence. If an absence is determined to be unexcused or the student is believed to be truant, the school will contact the parent or guardian to follow up as appropriate.

Reporting Absences and Tardiness

If your child will be absent from school, please contact Mrs. D'Ambrosio (ddambrosio@schalmont.net or 518-355-6255) in the School Counseling Office to report the absence.

A written note may be provided in lieu of a phone call or email.

If a student is late to school (after 7:40 a.m.), they must report to the Counseling Center to sign in and receive a late pass. A note from a parent or guardian explaining the reason for the tardiness should be submitted at that time or on the day the student returns.

Timely communication helps ensure accurate attendance records and promotes student safety and accountability.

Attendance Interventions

Chronic absenteeism and tardiness can significantly impact a student's academic success and overall well-being. If attendance becomes a concern, the student's team will collaborate with the family to address the issue. Interventions may include written notification, parent meetings, home visits, referrals to school-based counseling, and the development of formal attendance plans and contracts. Should attendance concerns persist, the school team may seek support from community organizations, such as the Probation Department or Child Protective Services.

Homework Requests for Absent Students

If a student is absent for more than three consecutive days, it is recommended that parents/guardians request homework through the Counseling Center.

Arrangements for collecting assignments may be made for pickup on the student's next school day or as coordinated with the Counseling Center.

Student Conduct and School Expectations

District Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct can be found on the District website, or by using this [link \(Code of Conduct\)](#). The Code outlines student expectations, infractions, and disciplinary and due process procedures.

Dignity Act for All Students

In accordance with the Dignity for All Students (DASA) Act, Education Law, Article 2, the District will strive to create an environment free of discrimination and harassment and will foster civility in the schools to prevent and prohibit conduct which is inconsistent with the District's educational mission.

Bullying often includes the following characteristics:

1. Power Imbalance – occurs when a bully uses his/her physical or social power over a target.
2. Intent to harm – the bully seeks to inflict physical or emotional harm and/or takes pleasure in this activity.
3. Threat of further aggression – the bully and the target believe the bullying will continue.
4. Terror – when any bullying increases, it becomes a “systematic violence or harassment used to intimidate and maintain dominance.”

There are at least three kinds of bullying: verbal, physical and social/relational.

1. Verbal bullying includes name calling, insulting remarks, verbal teasing, frightening phone calls, violent threats, extortion, taunting gossip, spreading rumors, racist slurs, threatening electronic communications (“Cyberbullying”), anonymous notes, etc.
2. Physical bullying includes poking, slapping, hitting, tripping or causing a fall, choking, kicking, punching, biting, pinching, scratching, spitting, twisting arms or legs, damaging clothes and personal property, or threatening gestures.
3. Social or relational bullying includes excluding someone from a group, isolating, shunning, spreading rumors or gossiping, arranging public humiliation, undermining relationships, teasing about clothing, looks, giving dirty looks, aggressive stares, etc.

Middle School DASA Coordinator - Mrs. Holdsworth

[Dignity for All Students \(DASA\) Policy](#)
[DASA Complaint Form](#)

Assembly Conduct

Assemblies are for students' education and enjoyment. Students should remain quiet out of consideration for other students in the audience and for the people presenting or performing. Students

will stay with their class once in the assembly. Cell phones and/or electronic devices of any kind must be out of sight, as with all school activities during school hours.

Transportation Conduct

The bus driver is in charge of all their passengers and will maintain discipline on the bus at all times. All student riders are to obey all directions from the bus driver. Bus drivers will not allow disorderly conduct or disruptions of any kind, which may endanger the safety of passengers. Bus drivers are allowed to assign students to certain seats on the bus.

All bus-riding students must observe the following safety precautions:

1. Approach the bus safely.
2. Board the bus in an orderly manner and immediately take a seat.
3. Remain seated at all times when the bus is moving.
4. Keep the aisle free of clutter
5. Keep arms, hands, and other parts of the body inside the bus
6. Never throw objects of any kind from the bus
7. Use appropriate language and keep hands and feet to yourself while on the bus.
8. When leaving the bus, step 5 to 10 feet in front of the stopped bus so as to be seen by the driver at all times; look to be sure that no traffic is moving from either direction and; cross only after the bus driver signals you to cross.

Conduct at School Events

Students are expected to demonstrate respectful and responsible behavior at all school-sponsored extra-curricular events (dances, athletic events, etc), whether held on campus or at an off-site location. Participation and attendance at these events are privileges that reflect on the entire school community.

Positive Sportsmanship at Athletic Events

All students are encouraged to display positive sportsmanship as spectators and participants. This includes:

- Showing respect for opponents, officials, coaches, and other spectators
- Refraining from inappropriate language, gestures, or behavior
- Supporting all participants in a positive manner, regardless of the outcome

Good sportsmanship promotes a welcoming and inclusive environment for all and reflects the values of our school community.

Substance Use and Disruptive Behavior

Any student who appears to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, or who engages in disruptive behavior during a school event, will face disciplinary consequences.

Cafeteria Expectations

Students are expected to follow general rules of good manners and respectful behavior while in the cafeteria. This includes:

- Leaving the table and surrounding area clean and orderly
- Placing all trash in the proper containers
- Keeping all food and drinks in the cafeteria
- Eating food only in the cafeteria

Important Reminders:

- Food and drink are not to be taken from the cafeteria.
- Students are not permitted to purchase food or drinks from the vending machines or cafeteria between classes.
- Students are not permitted to order food to be delivered to school.

Respect for shared spaces helps maintain a clean, safe, and welcoming environment for everyone.

Food and Drinks in School

Food should be consumed in the cafeteria unless otherwise approved by a teacher (e.g., Grade 5 birthday celebrations or lunch in a classroom under teacher supervision).

Drinks brought to school must be in containers with sealed lids to reduce the risk of spills and minimize disruptions to the learning environment. Canned beverages, glass bottles, and takeout drinks with straws are discouraged, as they are more likely to cause messes and distractions.

Soda, sports drinks, and juice should not be brought to school. Water in a reusable, sealed container is recommended.

Hall Passes and Classroom Sign-Out

- Students must have a hall pass in order to leave the classroom for any reason.
- Students are required to sign out when leaving the classroom and sign back in upon return.
- Only one student may leave the classroom at a time unless otherwise approved by the teacher.

These procedures help ensure student safety and accountability during instructional time.

Cell Phone and Electronic Device Use

In accordance with New York State Education Law, all school districts must adopt a policy that restricts the use of internet-enabled devices, including cell phones, during the school day.

Students are prohibited from using cell phones or any electronic devices that allow for internet or data plan communication at any time during the school day while on school grounds.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action and confiscation of the personal devices in accordance with the district's Code of Conduct.

“Bell to Bell”: No Phones in School

Devices Must Be Off and Stored: Students are expected to turn off and securely store their personal devices in their lockers or book bags upon arrival to school. The devices should not be visible or in use during the school day. This includes academic classes, study halls, cafeteria, auditorium, gymnasiums, library and hallways during passing periods.

Emergency Communication: We recognize that there may be times when a student needs to communicate with a parent or guardian. Should this occur, students can request to use a school phone in the classroom or through the main office to contact their family. Families are also welcome to contact the main office directly if there is an emergency.

Parent/Guardian-Student Communication: Parents or guardians can email the student’s district email, or can call the office to relay a message to a student or to have the student call the family member.

Exceptions for Medical or Educational Purposes: In cases where a student requires a device for medical reasons or as part of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan, exceptions will be made. Documentation from a medical provider will be required for such accommodations. The documentation must be approved by the building administration and/or the Committee on Special Education.

Enforcement and Consequences: Students who do not comply with this policy will have their device confiscated and may face disciplinary action in accordance with the District Code of Conduct. Devices will be returned to students at the end of the school day, and repeated violations may result in further consequences.

Corrective Action Plan

- First Offense - 5 days of confiscation (drop off at the main office)
- Second Offense - 10 days of confiscation (drop off at the main office)
- Third Offense - 15 days of confiscation (parent meeting to retrieve phone)
- Fourth Offense - Internal School Suspension/Out of School Suspension

****Failure to comply may result in further disciplinary action****

The school district is not responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of any cell phones or electronic devices that are brought to school.

Prohibited Personal Electronic Devices

- **Cell Phones**
- **Smartwatches**
 - Exceptions- Smartwatches may be used as time pieces and for tracking steps. Messaging or accessing the Internet is prohibited. Smart watches should be put into airplane mode to eliminate notifications and communication. If access to a smartwatch causes a distraction or disruption or is used for communication, students will face corrective action (see above).
- **Laptops**
 - Exceptions - Laptops (non-issued school Chromebooks) may be used for academic purposes with permission from both school administration and the Information Technology Department.. If access to a laptop causes a distraction or disruption, students will face corrective action.

- **Portable Gaming Consoles**
- **MP3 Players/Portable Music Devices**
- **Bluetooth/Wired Earbuds/Headphones (Unless approved by instructional staff)**

Video Recording, Audio Recording, and Still Images

The audio and/or video recording, as well as the taking of still images (photographs) of students or staff without their consent, is strictly prohibited on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, and on school transportation.

Students who engage in unauthorized recording or picture-taking may be subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with the district's Code of conduct.

This procedure is in place to protect the privacy, safety, and dignity of all members of the school community.

Computer and Internet Use

Students are responsible for the appropriate and ethical use of the school's computer networks. Communications on the network are often public in nature, so all general school rules regarding behavior and communication apply when using these systems.

Individual users must take responsibility for their actions and communications over the district's network. It is expected that all users will comply with district standards and policies.

The network is provided primarily for students to conduct research and support their learning. Access to network services is granted to students who agree to act in a considerate, responsible, and respectful manner.

Each year, students and their parents/guardians are required to sign an Acceptable Use Agreement before being permitted to use school computers and network resources.

Access to the network is a privilege, not a right, and comes with the responsibility to use technology appropriately and respectfully.

Student Dress Guidelines

All students are expected to dress appropriately for school and school functions. While individual style and personal expression are valued, student attire must adhere to reasonable guidelines that support a positive and productive learning environment.

Responsibility

Students and their parents/guardians hold the primary responsibility for ensuring dress and appearance meet school expectations. Teachers and district personnel will model and reinforce these guidelines and help students understand appropriate school attire.

General Expectations

A student's attire, grooming, and appearance, including hairstyle/color, jewelry, makeup, nails, and piercings, must:

- Be safe, adequately cover private body parts and prevent disruption to the learning environment.
- Refrain from wearing attire that is excessively revealing, subject to assessment by school administration.
- Ensure outer garments fully conceal all undergarments. Sleepwear and pajamas are prohibited, except on designated school administration spirit days.
- Include footwear at all times that permits safe engagement in school activities.
- Refrain from displaying vulgar, obscene, or defamatory content, or items that disparage individuals based on race, color, body type, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity/expression. Bandanas and gang-related attire are prohibited.
- Refrain from promoting or endorsing alcohol, tobacco, vaping, illegal substances, or unlawful/violent behaviors

Specific Restrictions

- Hats must be removed upon entering the school building; wearing hats during the school day is prohibited.
- Hoods must be taken down upon entering the school building; wearing hoods during the school day is prohibited.
- Use of blankets during the school day is not allowed. Blankets must be stored in bookbags or lockers.

Enforcement

Students who violate the dress guidelines will be asked to modify their appearance by covering or removing the offending item or, if necessary, replacing it. Refusal to comply may result in further disciplinary action.

Repeated violations may lead to further disciplinary consequences, up to and including out-of-school suspension.

Hallway Behavior Expectations

Students are expected to demonstrate respectful, safe, and responsible behavior while in the hallways. Our hallways are shared spaces, and maintaining a calm and orderly environment helps ensure the safety and success of all students.

Students should:

- Walk at all times — running is not permitted.
- Stay to the right side of the hallway to allow smooth flow of traffic.
- Use quiet voices; loud talking, yelling, or disruptive behavior is not allowed.
- Keep hands, feet, and belongings to themselves.
- Move directly and promptly to their next class or destination — no loitering.
- Respect others' personal space and school property (e.g., lockers, bulletin boards).
- Follow all adult directions without argument or delay.

Failure to follow hallway expectations may result in consequences.

Appropriate Language in School

Students are expected to use respectful and appropriate language at all times while at school, on the bus, and during school-sponsored events.

Inappropriate language includes:

- Swearing, profanity, or vulgar words
- Derogatory or offensive comments about race, gender, religion, ability, or appearance
- Hurtful or threatening language toward others
- Gossip, rumors, or teasing intended to harm
- Sexual or suggestive language
- Disrespectful tone or backtalk toward staff

Our school is a place for learning, safety, and mutual respect. Words matter — and how we speak to one another helps create a positive and supportive environment.

Students who use inappropriate language may face disciplinary consequences

School Safety & Preparedness

School Safety Procedures

Our school is required by law to have twelve safety drills during the school year. The following rules are to be followed when the fire alarm sounds.

1. All students will leave the building quickly and quietly, following the teacher's directions.
2. Once outside, students should move well away from the building, keeping the driveways clear for use by fire apparatus and report to the teacher for an attendance check.
3. Everyone should remain quiet and attentive, being alert to further instructions.
4. Students must not return to the building until the building administrator has given the proper instructions.
5. If a fire drill occurs during one of the lunch periods, students are to exit the cafeteria via the posted exits within the cafeteria.

Evacuation Procedures

Following the fire alarm evacuation, should it then become necessary to stay out of the school, students will be directed to a safe location. Once inside, students will report to designated areas according to classroom numbers. Students will then be expected to remain with their teacher who will take attendance. Under no circumstances may students leave the campus during a building evacuation.

Lock Down Drills

Our school is required by law to conduct four lock down drills a year. Teachers will review procedures with students in September.

Visitors

Visitors must show a driver's license for identification, sign in at the main office and receive a visitor's pass. As a general rule, visitors are not permitted to visit the school as guests or friends of students. Students from other schools and young children will not be received as guests and are not permitted on

school property. Alumni are not allowed to visit during the school day without permission from School Administration and/or Teacher. Any scheduled visit must be approved by the School Administration.

Food Orders and Deliveries

Students cannot order food and have it delivered to school.

School Resource Officer

The School Resource Officer (SRO) program is a nationally accepted program involving the placement of a law enforcement officer within the educational environment on several different levels. The officer is involved in a variety of functions.

- As a visible, active law enforcement figure on campus dealing with any law related issues.
- As a classroom resource for instruction in the following areas: law related education, violence diffusion, safety programs, alcohol and drug prevention, crime prevention and other areas.
- As a member of the faculty and administration team working hand in hand to solve problems in the school community.
- As a resource for the students, which will enable students to be associated with a law enforcement figure in the student's community.
- As a resource to teachers, parents and the students for conferences on an individual basis, dealing with individual problems or questions.
- As a counseling resource in areas which may affect the educational environment but may be of a law related nature.

The officers are in the schools to serve as resources to students, teachers, parents, non-instructional staff, administrators and the community at large. A major part of their school day is spent walking through the halls, dropping into the cafeteria, visiting classrooms by invitation, and visiting the library, study halls and in-school suspension rooms. The SRO may also chaperone dances, concerts, assist with school club activities, and assist instructional and support staff in reviewing and improving security procedures. Officers will respond to non-student trespassers on campus, responding to a direct request for help that results in averting potential problems, assist in the drug and alcohol unit in health class and provide career information regarding law enforcement related areas.

