



Greetings to all Morris families as we start a new school year!

We hope that this letter finds you well and rested having enjoyed your summer. The Morris staff and I look forward seeing all of our new and returning students on **Thursday, September 1st, the first day of school**. This letter contains general information that will help answer questions. A separate letter arriving soon will contain some more grade-specific information.

1. Please put your child's name on everything he/she brings to school - lunch boxes, clothing, boots, backpacks, etc.
2. Please send in an old shirt or a smock for Art class. Please put your child's name inside.
3. Please send in an **extra set of clothes and pair of shoes**. Many times children get wet on the playground or spill something on themselves at lunch and need a change of clothes.
4. Sneakers should be worn to school on gym days and are the preferred footwear on other days. Please avoid flip flops, clogs, and shoes with high heels. It is difficult for children to participate in active play with these types of footwear. If purchasing sneakers, please select a variety with non-marking soles.
5. Backpacks are helpful for carrying papers and books to and from school. Many of the larger backpacks with wheels do not fit into the lockers – please consider this when purchasing a backpack. **Trapper keepers are not necessary and do not fit in their assigned storage area**. A pocket folder that easily fits into the backpacks is a better choice for carrying papers to and from school.
6. Supplies such as pencils, scissors, crayons, paper, glue, and rulers are provided by the school.
7. Snacks for morning recess should be brought from home. Students are usually hungry by recess, so a healthy snack is important. Please do not send candy or soda and please respect any notice further restricting snack items due to food allergies.
8. **School Lunch (includes milk) costs \$2.50; milk alone costs 45 cents (an extra helping of hot lunch costs \$1.00)**. Each student will have a **lunch card** (scan-able debit card) to use each day at lunchtime. The Morris School lunch is a pay-ahead program. Deposits will be credited when received and subtracted each day a child buys lunch or milk. Deposits should be made in whole dollar amounts, and if you wish to pay for several weeks in advance by check, we can accept checks made payable to Lenox Public Schools Hot Lunch Program beginning the last week of August. If you wish to mail in a deposit, please mail it to Morris School, Hot Lunch Program, 129 West Street, Lenox, MA 01240. Parents are strongly encouraged to track the balance of their child's lunch account. Parents of students with deficit balances will be notified and students may be provided an alternative lunch until the balance is made positive.
9. We created a section of the cafeteria that has **peanut-free tables**. We will be asking children not to sit at these tables if they come to school with a lunch containing peanut butter. This will better protect those children who have life-threatening allergies to peanut products.

If your child is in a class with a student who is allergic to peanuts or tree nuts, a separate and very important letter will follow. Please pay close attention to the specifics.

10. **Student birthdays** will be recognized at a special luncheon once or twice a month; we ask that you **not** send in cupcakes or other birthday treats to the classroom. The PTO parent in charge of the monthly celebrations may contact parents to assist them in arranging an appropriate celebration of birthdays during that month. Because of food excesses, uncertainty of ingredients, life threatening food allergies, special diets, and other food concerns, *please do not send in any food or drink (besides student snack) without first okaying it with the classroom teacher*. Food treats are usually related to a curriculum event and the teacher's discretion and should be respected.

11. **The school day officially starts at 8:40** and children are marked tardy after this time. If you drive your child to school, he/she should arrive **between 8:20 and 8:35** at the Kindergarten driveway. **Children should not arrive before 8:20 unless they are coming for a scheduled activity**. Buses arrive at school between 8:30 and 8:35 and the children enter the school immediately. **It is very important that students are in their classrooms by 8:40; tardiness is extremely disruptive to the flow of the classroom and affects all students**. Children board the buses between 3:10 and 3:15 at the end of the school day.

12. **When parents pick up students (grades K-1 and older siblings)** at the end of the day, they will be dismissed at the PreSchool/Kindergarten entrance.

When parents pick up students (**grades 2-5**) at the end of the day, they will be dismissed at the exit behind the school. Please line up in the back close to the school side of the paved area so cars may approach the building and turn by the play structure. Please remain in your car and follow the line to the back door where your child will be dismissed. Drive SLOWLY in the parking lot. This procedure takes time – please be patient. **When dropping off children in the morning, please use the Kindergarten entrance only.**

13. Your child may not leave with anyone other than you without a **written note**. It is also important to write a note if you will be picking up your child at school; otherwise, your son/daughter will be sent home on his/her regular bus. **We prefer written notes to telephone messages.**

14. It is very important that any changes in plans for end-of-day dismissal be made only in an emergency. **All messages regarding end-of-day instructions need to come to the office** since teachers may not have checked their voice-mail until after school.

15. For security purposes when school is in session, **everybody** (parents and other visitors) **MUST use the communication system to enter the school during the school day at the main entrance and check in at the office and obtain a Visitor's Pass.**

16. The **Open House** at Morris (Grades K-2) is scheduled for **Thursday, September 22, 6:15 - 7:15 p.m.**
The **Open House** at Morris (Grades 3-5) is scheduled for **Thursday, September 22, 7:15 - 8:15 p.m.**

17. Professional Development days are scheduled for **October 28th (full Day), January 13th (half-day) and March 23rd (half day)**. Other half-days scheduled for the year include **Thursday, April 5 (Spring Conferences), and the last day of school**. On half-days, all students are dismissed at 12:00.

18. We will be using a trimester system of reporting on your child's progress. Report cards will be issued on November 22, March 20, and the final report card will be issued three days after school is out – you may pick them up or they will be mailed. Parent-teacher conferences will be held on **December 8th and 9th (12/9 - no school for students)**, and April 4th & 5th (**4/5 - half-day for students**).

19. The address for the Morris School is 129 West Street. The **main telephone numbers for the Morris School** are **637-5522/637-5570** and the **Special Needs Office number** is **637-5571**.

20. Several people at Morris with whom you may have contact are **Jill Barnoski**, Mr. Lee's Secretary, **Sue Hanson**, Special Needs Director's Secretary, and **Kathy Koscher** and **Becky Miller**, Building Paraprofessionals, who will be working in the main office. Other staff who your children see daily are **Judy Hopper**, Building Clerk; and **Mike Steuerwald**, daytime and lead custodian. Student health questions should be directed to **Mrs. Mary Jane Pignatelli**, School Nurse or **Mrs. Daria Woodger**, Health Aide. Mrs. Pignatelli, our school nurse, is primarily assigned to the elementary school. Mrs. Barnoski is responsible for all attendance, student records, and the Principal's correspondence; questions involving any sensitive student or family information, bus problems, or other personal issues should be directed to her. Please call (**637-5522 ext 0**) if your child is sick and will not be attending school.

21. Parents should be aware that during the first few days/weeks of school, we send a number of **important papers** home. These include, but are not limited to, **Free lunch information, Student insurance forms, Walking field trip form, Lunch money deposit slips, Intramural sports schedule/signup, Signing up for School Directory, School pictures information, include e-mail address to receive Newsletters and PTO information, and PTO activity signup sheet for parents**. Most have an aspect of timeliness as to their return.

22. **School picture dates** are Thursday and Friday, **September 15th and 16th**.

23. Please note that any parent who wishes to volunteer in the school or a specific classroom, on the playground, or accompany children on a field trip **must have completed a CORI form** that is checked by the Superintendent of the Lenox Public Schools. Having had a CORI check by another organization is NOT sufficient for us since we do not legally have access to that information. A CORI form is on our web site for downloading. CORI checks need to be re-done every three years.

We look forward to seeing you in a few weeks.

Yours,

Timothy Lee