

DHMC ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL DISMISSAL AND COMMUNICATION POLICY

RATIONALE

The conclusion of the school day, with children going about their various closing tasks, may look chaotic to the casual observer, but underlying it, extremely important developmental tasks are taking place. It is a time when children are finishing and putting away their work, restoring the classroom and hallway environments, and preparing both mentally and physically for the balance of their day and evening—in short, assuming appropriate responsibility for themselves and their surroundings. Because the students' lockers are in the hallway, there are already numerous distractions as they gather their things to take home. Adding more adults and younger siblings to the mix makes it more difficult for the students to bring their day to an orderly close. It also often draws the teachers from their primary responsibilities, which include maintaining security, and overseeing and guiding their students during this daily transition. Our goal is to institute procedures that respect the cycle of activity at the end of the school day, but also maintain good communication between parents and staff.

PROCEDURE

We strongly encourage elementary and middle school families to use the pickup line, as it provides a clear vote of confidence in the child's ability to negotiate the world of school. That said, we realize that there will be exceptions. Early-arriving parents who are not using the pickup line may sign in and gather in the north lobby. All students will be dismissed through the main entrance of the school. Elementary and Middle School students not attending latchkey will proceed to the gym with their class. At 3:30 p.m., students will be called from the gym for pickup, either to a verified person in the lobby or the verified person/vehicle in the pickup line. Students not picked up by 3:45 p.m. will be escorted to latchkey.

We are prioritizing safety over convenience in the case of families who have toddlers, preschoolers, or kindergartners enrolled. We require that they still walk in to get their children. They may then join the pickup line in the circle drive or meet their older children in the lobby.

COMMUNICATION

Teachers very much want to maintain clear and open communication with the families of their students. At the same time, however, their full attention during the school day and through the pickup period needs to be directed to the students. Parents who would like to talk with a teacher have several means of setting up communication. We always prefer face-to-face or spoken conversations over electronic media, and our policies reflect this.

School Telephone (313-359-3000)

The telephone at the front desk is answered live from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., and messages are promptly delivered. In an emergency, the number above is the one to use. It can also be used to request a meeting or a phone call from a teacher.

Office Hours

Elementary and Middle School teachers will hold office hours one day a week for an hour after school. Parents are free to drop in without an appointment, or to arrange a set time to assure availability. Appointments can be set up by calling or emailing.

Email

Teachers and other school personnel will not use their personal email addresses for school-related communication. Each has a DHMC email address and this will always be shared with parents. DHMC's school-wide practices reserve email for answering simple questions or setting up a phone call or a meeting. Teachers do not conduct conference-like discussions about their students via email. Teachers will reply to email within 24-48 hours. They will not reply during the school day or on the weekend.

A Note About Texting

Because of the implied immediacy of texting, and because teachers are not using their cell phones for school purposes, this means of communication will not be used.