



2026-27

Back-to-School

Startup Guide

Superintendent's Message



Dear Niskayuna Families,

Welcome to the 2026-27 school year! Once again, we will continue advancing the three pillars of our strategic plan: delivering a world-class educational experience through high-quality curriculum and programs, fostering a culture of belonging and empowerment for all, and strengthening the partnerships that expand opportunities for students, families, staff and the community.

The work ahead is both ambitious and inspiring, and together we will continue building a Niskayuna that will support our community now and for generations to come.

Our students are so central to our EPIC mission Niskayuna. Their curiosity, passion and innovation inspire our team's work and accelerate our district's growth and achievement.

Thank you for your tireless support of our district and all that we strive to do to make Niskayuna a wonderful place for your children to learn and grow.

Sincerely,

Carl J. Mummenthey

Superintendent of Schools

Our Strategic Priorities at-a-Glance

The Niskayuna Central School District will use the 2024-27 Strategic Plan to advance the district's mission, vision and measure progress made among its three strategic pillars and goals. The plan is available in its entirety on our website, www.niskyschools.org/about-us/niskayuna-strategic-plan/.



Curriculum & Programs

Create a world-class educational experience.

Goal: Design and implement a high quality educational program for all students.



Environment & Culture

Create learning experiences that are safe, welcoming, and constructive for all.

Goal: Foster a culture of belonging and empowerment, that ensures the respectful treatment for all individuals.



Partnerships

Create meaningful relationships that benefit our students, staff, and community that promote lifelong opportunities for learning.

Goal: Support community and school partnerships to enhance learning opportunities for students, staff, families, and the larger community.

DIVERSITY

EQUITY

INCLUSION

Strategic Plan in Action



BELOW Bringing residents together through the joy of lifelong learning. Niskayuna's revived Continuing Education program is back and offering adult residents a variety of courses. As a key element of the district's strategic plan, the program partners with local experts and businesses to lead classes ranging from high-energy Zumba and bocce to hands-on knitting and small business social media skills. Open to all adults ages 18 and older, the popular initiative brings community members together to connect, share passions and rediscover the joy of learning. Class offerings will continue to expand during the 2026-27 school year.

Find offerings at www.niskayunaschools.org/community/continuing-education/.



ABOVE Hitting all the right notes! Van Antwerp and Iroquois middle school music programs are hitting a new high note thanks to updated scheduling and dedicated facility upgrades. Previously, band, chorus and orchestra rehearsals were held before the bell, requiring early morning trips to the high school. Through voter-approved capital projects in 2021 and 2024, music ensembles are now fully integrated into the standard school day. Featuring a state-of-the-art music suite at Iroquois and spaces undergoing transformation at Van Antwerp, these changes have made music education more accessible and equitable, leading to increased participation. That's music to our ears!



LEFT Serving up success! This past year, Niskayuna cafeterias expanded menus to offer more inclusive, diverse and delicious meal options for all students. Updates included a daily certified halal turkey and cheese sandwich across all schools, a new yogurt parfait at both middle schools and a daily grilled cheese croissant at all elementary schools. Iroquois Middle School also introduced hot breakfast sandwiches and daily pizza options. Free meals, combined with new and unique offerings, led to a 207% increase in breakfasts served and a 54% increase in lunches served last year.

Our Schools



BIRCHWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Birchwood Elementary School opened its doors to students in September 1956. Today, the school serves approximately 400 students.

897 Birchwood Lane
Niskayuna, NY 12309
Phone: (518) 344-2910
Principal: Rebecca Grabicki



CRAIG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Craig Elementary School dates back to a one-room school house located at the top of Aqueduct Hill in the 1800s. Craig opened in its current location in 1949 and today serves approximately 400 students.

2566 Balltown Road
Niskayuna, NY 12309
Phone: (518) 377-0156
Principal: Dr. William Anders



GLENCLYFF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Glenclyff Elementary School opened in 1956 and today serves approximately 350 students. Glenclyff students come from Schenectady and Saratoga Counties, parts of Clifton Park, Glenville, Niskayuna and Rexford as well as the village of Alplaus.

961 Riverview Road
Rexford, NY 12148
Phone: (518) 399-2323
Principal: David Zadoorian



HILLSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Hillside Elementary School opened its doors to students in 1956. Today, Hillside serves nearly 400 students.

1100 Cornelius Avenue
Niskayuna, NY 12309
Phone: (518) 377-1856
Principal: Dr. Shireen Fasciglione



ROSENDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Rosendale Elementary School opened its doors to students in September 1956. Today, the school serves approximately 400 students.

2445 Rosendale Road
Niskayuna, NY 12309
Phone: (518) 377-3123
Principal: Luke Rakoczy



VAN ANTWERP MIDDLE SCHOOL

Van Antwerp Middle School was originally built in 1877 as a one-room schoolhouse. Today, the school serves approximately 400 students in grade 6.

2253 Story Avenue
Niskayuna, NY 12309
Phone: (518) 370-1243
Principal: John Moskov
Assistant Principal: Stacey Muscato



IROQUOIS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Iroquois Middle School opened in September 1969. Today, the school serves approximately 800 students in grades 7-8.

2495 Rosendale Road
Niskayuna, NY 12309
Phone: (518) 377-2233
Principal: Thomas Fyvie
Assistant Principal: Christopher Adamek



NISKAYUNA HIGH SCHOOL

Niskayuna High School opened in 1957. The school serves approximately 1,350 students in grades 9-12. Thirteen academic departments offer a variety of programs.

1626 Balltown Road
Niskayuna, NY 12309
Phone: (518) 382-2511
Principal: Anthony Malizia
Asst. Principal (Gr. 9 & 12): Joseph Coleman
Asst. Principal (Gr. 10 & 11): Danielle Vincent



DISTRICT OFFICE

1430 Balltown Road
Niskayuna, NY 12309
Phone: (518) 377-4666
Fax: (518) 377-4074
Hours: 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Back-to-School: 2026-27



School Arrival and Dismissal Times

LEVEL	ARRIVAL	INSTRUCTIONAL DAY BEGINS	DISMISSAL
Elementary (K-5)	7:45 a.m. <i>Students should not arrive at school prior to 7:45 a.m.</i>	7:55 a.m.	2:10 p.m.
Van Antwerp Middle School	8:35 a.m. <i>Students should not arrive at school prior to 8:35 a.m.</i>	8:43 a.m.	3:20 p.m.
Iroquois Middle School	8:35 a.m. <i>Students should not arrive at school prior to 8:25 a.m.</i>	8:43 a.m.	3:20 p.m.
High School	8:15 a.m. <i>Buses arrive at approximately 8:25 a.m.</i>	8:40 a.m.	3:15 p.m.



District Technology

Niskayuna Central School District has a wide array of technology available to assist students, parents and educators to enhance their educational experience. These tools were secured to provide our students with a 21st Century Learning environment.

For more information and guidelines for PowerSchool, ParentSquare, student chromebooks, email, online safety, data privacy and other technology, visit the Niskayuna Information Technology Department website.



Be present. Be engaged.

Improving our school environment



At the start of the 2025-26 school year, Niskayuna CSD implemented a policy that limits student use of cell phones and other Internet-enabled devices during the school day. The policy aligns with a New York state law that restricts all cell phones in public schools.

More than simply preventing students from using devices during the school day, our policy and our intent is to create an environment that's a safe place to concentrate and learn, free from online distractions.

How will students store devices during the day?

Grades K-5

No cell phones or Internet-enabled devices may be present or in the possession of an elementary student while at the elementary school. This is the current and longstanding practice that will continue to be enforced.

Grades 6-12

Yondr pouches are the primary tool for enforcing this policy for students in grades 6-12. The pouches are individual bags that secure a student's cell phone and Internet-enabled devices upon entry to school. The bags are unlocked at the end of the school day. Internet-enabled devices should be powered down before they are placed in the Yondr pouch. Students will keep their devices with them at all times, but they will be in a secure pouch for the duration of the school day.

In case of an emergency or in the event that a student needs to be contacted, families may contact the main office of their child's school.

- > Birchwood (518) 344-2910
- > Craig (518) 377-0156
- > Glenclyff (518) 399-2323
- > Hillside (518) 377-1856
- > Rosendale (518) 377-3123
- > Van Antwerp (518) 370-1243
- > Iroquois (518) 377-2233
- > High School (518) 382-2511

Learn more at www.niskayschools.org/be-present-be-engaged.

Contact Information

District Administration

Superintendent

Carl Mummenthey (518) 382-2511, ext. 21738
cmummenthey@niskyschools.org

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction

Jessica Moore (518) 377-4666, ext. 50703
jmoore@niskyschools.org

Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services

Timothy Fowler (518) 377-4666, ext. 50732
tfowler@niskyschools.org

Assistant Superintendent of Business & Operations

Matt Leon (518) 377-4666, ext. 50712
mleon@niskyschools.org

Chief Equity Officer

Latisha J. Barnett (518) 377-4666, ext. 50741
lbarnett@niskyschools.org

Director of Human Resources

Matthew Petrin (518) 377-4666, ext. 50736
mpetrin@niskyschools.org

School Phone Numbers & Principals

Birchwood

Principal Rebecca Grabicki (518) 344-2910, ext. 10701
rbauergrabicki@niskyschools.org

Craig

Principal William Anders (518) 377-0156, ext. 11701
wanders@niskyschools.org

Glenclyff

Principal David Zadoorian (518) 399-2323, ext. 12701
dzadoorian@niskyschools.org

Hillside

Principal Shireen Fasciglione (518) 377-1856, ext. 13701
sfasciglione@niskyschools.org

Rosendale

Principal Luke Rakoczy (518) 377-3123, ext. 14701
lrakoczy@niskyschools.org

Van Antwerp

Principal John Moskov (518) 370-1243, ext. 20705
jmoskov@niskyschools.org

Assistant Principal Stacey Muscato (518) 370-1243, ext. 20717
smuscato@niskyschools.org

Iroquois

Principal Thomas Fyvie (518) 377-2233, ext. 19705
tfyvie@niskyschools.org

Assistant Principal Chris Adamek (518) 377-2233, ext. 19717
cadamek@niskyschools.org

Niskayuna High School

Principal Anthony Malizia (518) 382-2511, ext. 21709
amalizia@niskyschools.org

Assistant Principal Joseph Coleman (518) 382-2511, ext. 21704
jcoleman@niskyschools.org

Assistant Principal Danielle Vincent (518) 382-2511, ext. 21702
dvincent@niskyschools.org

District Directors, Operations & Services

Director of Art & Design

Sara Bussert (518) 382-2511, ext. 21738
sbussert@niskyschools.org

Director of Athletics, Health & Physical Education

Matt Ronca (518) 382-2511, ext. 21761
mronca@niskyschools.org

Director of Counseling & English as a New Language

Mike Brannigan (518) 382-2511, ext. 21665
mbrannigan@niskyschools.org

Director of English Language Arts & Library Media

Megan Collins (518) 377-4666, ext. 50751
mcollins@niskyschools.org

Director of Music

Eric Hughes (518) 382-2511, ext. 21711
ehughes@niskyschools.org

Director of Mathematics, Computer Science & Business

Ashley Rickert (518) 377-4666, ext. 50752
arickert@niskyschools.org

Director of World Languages & Social Studies

Michael Palanza (518) 377-4666, ext. 50755
mpalanza@niskyschools.org

Director of Science & Engineering Technology

Michael Kloczko (518) 377-4666, ext. 50753
mkloczko@niskyschools.org

Director of Professional Learning and Continuing Education

Amy Isenhardt (518) 377-2233, ext. 50122
aisenhardt@niskyschools.org

Director of Student Growth & Instructional Support

Laurel Jones (518) 377-4666, ext. 50723
ljones@niskyschools.org

Director of Student Support Services, K-6

Julie Bouyea (518) 382-2525, ext. 21736
jbouyea@niskyschools.org

Director of Student Support Services, 7-12

Andrea Marques-Clarke (518) 382-2525, ext. 50735
amarquesclarke@niskyschools.org

Assistant Director of Student Support Services

Brianna Meikle (518) 382-2525, ext. 50771
bmeikle@niskyschools.org

Director of Information Technology

Justin Cramer (518) 382-2511, ext. 21741
jcramer@niskyschools.org

Communications Office

Monica Lester (518) 377-4666, ext. 50707
mlester@niskyschools.org

Erin Drescher (518) 377-4666, ext. 50727
edrescher@niskyschools.org

Lindsay Quackenbush (518) 377-4666, ext. 50704
lquackenbush@niskyschools.org

Food Service Director

Ross Tuskey (518) 598-8151
rtuskey@niskyschools.org

Transportation Director

Richard Kirk (518) 370-0160
rkirk@niskyschools.org

Director of Facilities

Anthony Lento (518) 344-2934, ext. 34702
alento@niskyschools.org

How Can We Help You?

What to do when you have a question or concern

We want to address your questions and concerns quickly and effectively. In order to do so, please contact the staff member most directly involved first. If the question remains unresolved, please proceed to the next level.

When someone contacts a board of education member or a district administrator before working through the process, they will be referred to the staff member most immediately involved with that particular issue. The board of education will become involved, if necessary, in the final stage of the process.

Below is an example of who to contact first and how to proceed if your questions or concerns are not addressed.

Teacher



Department Director



Principal



Assistant Superintendent



Superintendent



Board of Education

Not sure who to contact?

If you do not know who to contact first, please call your child's school and ask. The district website, www.niskayunaschools.org, contains contact information for staff members at each school.

Our Board of Education

It is the primary responsibility of the board of education to set policies for the school district. While individual board members listen to concerns, they can only act as an entire body when conducting official board of education meetings. The superintendent and administrative staff are legally empowered to administer the school district and operationalize the policies and decisions of the board of education. Reach the entire board by email at schoolboard@niskayschools.org.

Board Members

- > Jessica LaFex, *President*
- > Ehasuyi Gomes, *Vice President*
- > Elisabeth Cococcia
- > My'Lisse Kochan
- > Howard Schlossberg
- > Judith Tomisman
- > Kimberly Tully

Board meetings are generally held in the District Office Board Room at 6 p.m. unless otherwise announced before a meeting. A public livestream is provided for meetings. The board meeting dates and times listed below may be subject to change. Please visit the district calendar at www.niskayunaschools.org for the most updated information, including how to access the livestream.

2026-27 Board of Education Meetings

Sept. 15, 2026	Regular Meeting
Sept. 29, 2026	Retreat
Oct. 13, 2026	Regular Meeting
Oct. 27, 2026	Regular Meeting
Nov. 17, 2026	Regular Meeting
Dec. 15, 2026	Regular Meeting
Jan. 12, 2027	Regular Meeting
Jan. 26, 2027	Retreat
Feb. 9, 2027	Regular Meeting
Feb. 23, 2027	Special Meeting
March 2, 2027	Regular Meeting
March 23, 2027	Special Meeting
April 6, 2027	Regular Meeting
April 20, 2027	Special Meeting
May 4, 2027	Regular Meeting
May 25, 2027	Regular Meeting
June 15, 2027	Regular Meeting

Stay Connected to Your District

ParentSquare

The district uses an application called ParentSquare for school-to-home communication. This communications platform is designed to keep parents and family members informed and encourage greater engagement and connection with our schools. ParentSquare provides a centralized location for many types of communication between you and the school.

In particular, ParentSquare provides a safe way for district administrators, school principals, teachers, staff and parents to:

- Send and receive school and class information.
- Share classroom pictures and files.
- See calendar items.
- Sign up to volunteer when applicable.
- Schedule parent-teacher conferences.
- And much more . . . all in one centralized place!

PowerSchool

PowerSchool Parent Portal is an online portal that is accessible anywhere on the web. Parents or guardians can log in to PowerSchool to see all of their children's information in one place. This includes grades, assignments, scores, attendance and schedules. Families that are new to the district will receive a letter in the mail to register.

Social Media

Our district takes pride in connecting with our community through a memorable social media presence. We strive to tell compelling district stories and share highlights from all aspects of Niskayuna life! Follow us at our channels below.

-  NiskayunaCSD
-  niskayunaschools
-  niskayunaschools
-  niskayuna_csd

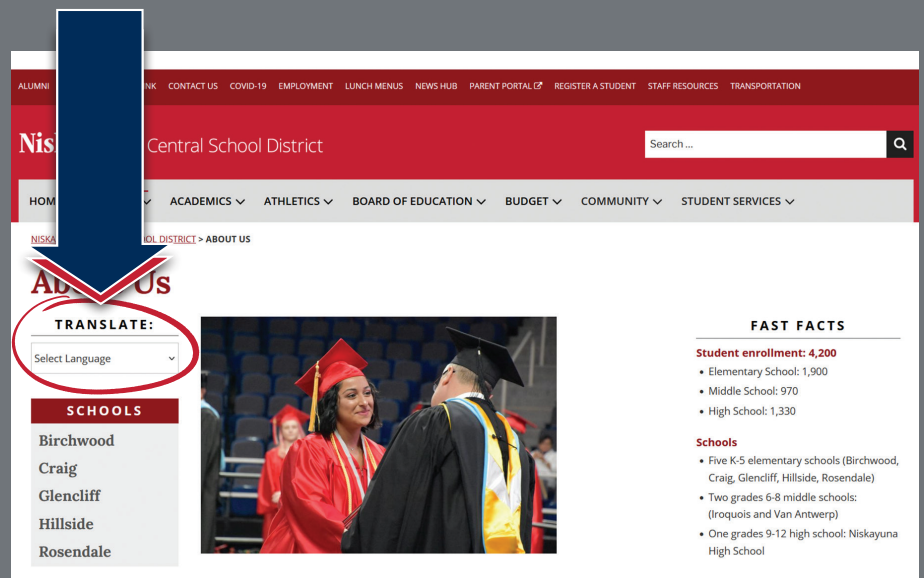


Website

The district's website www.niskyschools.org is a resource for the Niskayuna community about academics and all school functions. Visit our website for information on each school and to read about accomplishments and announcements from around the district.

Our website www.niskyschools.org can be translated. Please see the graphic on this page to select the language of your choice. If you have any questions or concerns related to receiving information in a language other than English, please contact Director of Counseling and English as a New Language Mike Brannigan at mbrannigan@niskyschools.org.

Please note: We will be launching a new and updated niskyschools.org later this fall!



2026-27 District Calendar

September 2026

- 7** Labor Day – Offices Closed
- 8** First Day of School for Grades 1-8
Kindergarten and Grade 9 Orientation
- 9** First Day of School for Grades 9-12
First Full Day of Kindergarten
- 21** Yom Kippur – Superintendent's Conference Day – No Classes

October 2026

- 9** Emergency Early Release Day Drill
- 12** Columbus/Indigenous Peoples' Day – No Classes & Offices Closed
- 23** K-5 Early Dismissal – Parent-Teacher Conferences
- 28** K-6 Early Dismissal – Parent-Teacher Conferences

November 2026

- 3** Election Day – Superintendent's Conference Day – No Classes
- 5** K-8 Early Dismissal – Parent-Teacher Conferences
- 9** K-5 Early Dismissal – Parent-Teacher Conferences
- 11** Veterans Day – No Classes & Offices Closed
- 25-27** Thanksgiving Recess – No Classes & Offices Closed

December 2026

- 24-25** Christmas Observed – No Classes & Offices Closed
- 28-31** Winter Holiday Recess – No Classes & Offices Open

January 2027

- 1** New Year's Day – No Classes & Offices Closed
- 4** Classes Resume
- 18** Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day – No Classes & Offices Closed
- 26-29** Regents Exams
- 29** Regents Rating Day – No High School Classes
Grade 8 Orientation

February 2027

- 15** Presidents Day – No Classes & Offices Closed
- 16-19** Winter Recess – No Classes & Offices Open

March 2027

- 3** K-6 Early Dismissal – Parent-Teacher Conferences
- 9** K-8 Early Dismissal – Parent-Teacher Conferences
- 10** Eid al Fitr – Superintendent's Conference Day – No Classes
- 26** Good Friday – No Classes & Offices Closed
- 29-31** Spring Recess – No Classes & Offices Open

April 2027

- 1-2** Spring Recess – No Classes & Offices Open

May 2027

- 31** Memorial Day – No Classes & Offices Closed

June 2027

- 10** Last Regularly Scheduled Day at the High School
- 11** High School Local Exams
- 14** High School Local Exams
- 15-17** Regents Exams
- 18** Regents Rating Day
- 21-24** Regents Exams
- 22** K-5 Half Day
- 23** Last Day for K-8 (Half Day)
Graduation
- 25** Regents Rating Day

Cultural and Religious Celebrations

In addition to the dates listed here, our students celebrate and participate in a variety of cultural and religious events and holidays throughout the year. We embrace the rich diversity of our school community and understand that in many cases our students' participation in these traditions come before school activities. We will also avoid conflicts between specific celebrations and holidays and school events. You will find many cultural and religious celebrations highlighted on the school calendar on our website.

Note: Calendar dates are subject to change. Visit the calendar on the district website at niskyschools.org/calendar for the most updated information.

Safety & Support

Counseling & Mental Health

The Niskayuna K-12 Counseling Department is committed to providing a caring and supportive program. We inspire our students to develop academically, socially and emotionally to become strong and responsible citizens who are well prepared for an ever-changing world.

Director of Counseling & English as a New Language

Mike Brannigan mbrannigan@niskyschools.org

Elementary Contacts

Birchwood

Psychologist: Samantha Lee slee@niskyschools.org
Social Worker: Bailey Pangman bpangman@niskyschools.org

Craig

Psychologist: Beth Sabourin esabourin@niskyschools.org
Social Worker: Debbie Shephard dshephard@niskyschools.org
Counselor: Stephany Kennedy. skennedy@niskyschools.org

Glencliff

Psychologist: Jessica Mucilli jmucilli@niskyschools.org
Social Worker: Madison Pastoriza mpastoriza@niskyschools.org

Hillside

Psychologist: Maggie Williams mwilliams@niskyschools.org
Social Worker: Sarah Mae Sinisi ssinisi@niskyschools.org
Counselor: Stephany Kennedy. skennedy@niskyschools.org

Rosendale

Psychologist: Janell Timmany jtimmany@niskyschools.org
Social Worker: Jessica Brennan jbrennan@niskyschools.org

Middle School Contacts

Van Antwerp

Van Antwerp Counseling Center (518) 370-1243, option #2

Grade 6 Counselors:
Meghan McCarthy mmccarthy@niskyschools.org
TEAM Commitment and TEAM Courage A-L

Kevin McFerran kmcFerran@niskyschools.org
TEAM Perseverance and TEAM Courage M-Z

Psychologist: Brandon Sinisi bsinisi@niskyschools.org

Social Worker: Alyce Malone
amalone@niskyschools.org

Iroquois

Iroquois Counseling Center (518) 377-2361

Iroquois Counselors:
Brian McAllister bmcAllister@niskyschools.org
7th GRADE TEAM Citizenship and 8th GRADE TEAM Determination

Kate Carroll kcarroll@niskyschools.org
7th GRADE TEAM Persistence and 8th GRADE TEAM Commitment

Liza Friedland. lfriedland@niskyschools.org
7th GRADE TEAM Integrity and 8th GRADE TEAM Courage

Psychologist: Alyssa Rodriguez arodriguez2@niskyschools.org
Social Worker: Shannon Faizy sfaizy@niskyschools.org
Social Worker: Alexa Ruchel-Brierley aruchelbrierly@niskyschools.org

High School Contacts

Each student at Niskayuna High School is assigned a counselor to help navigate the difficulties and pave the way to graduation. Counseling assignments are based on grade and last name. Students can find their counselor and contact information below.

Psychologist: Jennifer Reittinger jreittinger@niskyschools.org
Psychologist: Justine Coman jcoman@niskyschools.org
Social Worker: Carly Belmonte cbelmonte@niskyschools.org
Social Worker: Courtney Boshart cboshart@niskyschools.org
Social Worker: Meg Farquharson mfarquharson@niskyschools.org
High School Counseling Center (518) 382-2511, ext. 21724

School Counselors

Tim Albanese talbanese@niskyschools.org

Class of 2028 – Grade 10: A - Da
Class of 2027 – Grade 11: Afg - Dun
Class of 2026 – Grade 12: A - Di

Lea Miller emiller@niskyschools.org

Class of 2028 – Grade 10: De - Ki
Class of 2027 – Grade 11: Ea - Lag
Class of 2026 – Grade 12: Do - Ka

Anne Hughes ahughes@niskyschools.org

Class of 2028 – Grade 10: Ko - Ra
Class of 2027 – Grade 11: Lan - Raj
Class of 2026 – Grade 12: Ke - Pe

Carnita Melvin cmelvin@niskyschools.org

Class of 2029 – Grade 9: A - Z

Jennifer Lunetta jlunetta@niskyschools.org

Class of 2028 – Grade 10: Re - Z
Class of 2027 – Grade 11: Rei - Z
Class of 2026 – Grade 12: Po - Z

Nancy Bushee nbushee@niskyschools.org

High School Assistance Team 9; High School Assistance Team 10;
Individualized Success Program; Academic Skills Lab; Alternative Education

Crisis Lines & Community Resources

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline 988

Free and confidential support available 24/7 for people in distress,
prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best
practices for professionals

Help by Text Text HOME to 741741

Connect with a Crisis Counselor

Capital Region Child & Adolescent Mobile Crisis (518) 292-5499

Capital Region Adult Mobile Crisis (518) 292-5461

Ellis Medicine Crisis Services (518) 243-4000, 1101

Nott Street Available 24/7 via phone

Rape/Sexual Assault Center (518) 243-4306

Ellis Hospital's Emergency Adolescent Crisis Unit

Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-342-3720

Trevor Lifeline (LGBTQ Youth) 1-866-488-7386



Health Services

The goal of school health services is to maintain optimum health for all children, enabling them to realize their full potential.

Physicals & Screenings

State law requires a physical examination by a New York State-licensed physician for new entrants and students entering grades prekindergarten or kindergarten, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11. The state recommends that this physical be performed by the family physician. The school physician does physicals only when the family has not arranged for the examination. Health screenings (e.g. vision, scoliosis) conducted by school nurses vary by grade level. Contact your school nurse for more information.

Required Immunizations

All students enrolled in New York state schools grades K-12 must provide proof of immunizations. If you have any questions, contact your family physician or school nurse. If you do not have a health care provider or need help getting an immunization, the district can provide information from the local health department about where your child can receive them.

Allergy Aware, Allergy Prepared

As a district, we take the health and safety of all members of our school community seriously. At the beginning of this school year, we want to remind you of the importance of taking steps to protect people who have severe allergic reactions to some foods, like nuts.

No cafeterias in our school buildings serve products containing nuts. We recommend only nut-free foods for lunches and snacks that students bring to school. If your student has a severe condition, you may provide an EpiPen (Epinephrine) with the proper medical order from the pediatrician to be held in the health office.

School staff are trained to recognize the signs of a severe allergic reaction. Symptoms may include:

- **GENERAL:** dizziness, loss of consciousness, feeling of panic or doom.
- **MOUTH:** swelling of lips, face, tongue, throat, a report that the mouth “feels hot.”
- **BREATHING:** wheezing, difficulty breathing, congested cough, tightness in throat.
- **STOMACH:** discomfort, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, diarrhea.
- **SKIN:** hives, swelling, rash.

Remind your child to alert the nearest teacher or staff member if they or someone around them is exhibiting these symptoms.

School Nurses

Birchwood

Melissa Nardolillo
mnardolillo@niskyschools.org
(518) 344-2910, ext. 10704

Craig

Melanie Niedzwiecki
mniedzwiecki@niskyschools.org
(518) 377-3123, ext. 11704

Glenclyff

Meghan Lee
mlee@niskyschools.org
(518) 399-2323, ext. 12704

Hillside

Chelsea Reutemann
creutemann@niskyschools.org
(518) 377-1856, ext. 13704

Rosendale

Amber Fox
afox@niskyschools.org
(518) 377-3123, ext. 14704

Van Antwerp

Carol Perrino
cperrino@niskyschools.org
(518) 370-1243, ext. 20707

Iroquois

Sascha Cade
scade@niskyschools.org
(518) 377-2019, ext. 19707

Renata Atwood
ratwood@niskyschools.org
(518) 377-2019, ext. 19707

High School

Esther Guzman
nursesNHS@niskyschools.org
(518) 382-2511, ext. 21768

Carol Werblin
nursesNHS@niskyschools.org
(518) 382-2511, ext. 21768

Cheryl Berkof, Clerical Assistant
cberkof@niskyschools.org
(518) 382-2511, ext. 21767



Medication in School

In order for a school nurse to administer medication during school hours, either prescription or over the counter, the following are required by the State of New York:

1. An order from a licensed prescriber including name of medication, dosage and time to be administered.
2. Parent or guardian permission to administer the medication.
3. The parent/guardian must assume the responsibility to have the medication delivered directly to the school nurse in a properly labeled original container. Students who have been diagnosed with severe allergies or asthma may need to carry emergency medications on their person. This is permissible and highly advised. The physician may complete a release to self-medicate form. The school nurse will keep this on file. Please contact your child's school nurse for necessary forms.

First Aid

Basic first aid is rendered to all who may require it. If the injury is extensive, emergency services may be called to transport the student for medical attention. Accident/incident reports are made on all serious injuries.

Insurance

School district accident insurance covers students for accidents that occur during school activities. It is nonduplicating coverage, meaning the family must first file with its own health and accident insurance plan. Forms for medical expenses that are not thus covered may be obtained from the school nurse at the child's school.

Be SMART: Resources on Secure Gun Storage

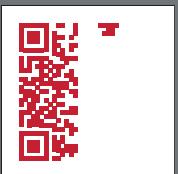
Providing our students and staff in the Niskayuna Central School District with a safe educational environment is our top priority. We are all aware of incidents of gun violence in our state and across the nation, and a national survey found that 57 percent of teens are concerned that there will be a shooting in their school.

Studies of all types of school-based gun violence across decades all point to the same significant point of intervention—addressing a student's unauthorized access to guns in the home. For example, a recent Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center study of targeted school violence incidents from 2008 to 2017, found that 76 percent of the firearms were obtained from the home of a parent or close relative.

Unsecured guns in the home pose a risk to students beyond gun violence in schools. Every year, 350 children under the age of 18 unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else. That's

roughly one unintentional shooting per day. Gun suicide among children has reached the highest rate in more than 20 years. In the overwhelming majority of these incidents, the gun used belonged to someone in their home. Research shows that secure firearm storage practices are associated with up to an 85 percent reduction in the risk of self-inflicted and unintentional firearm injuries among children and teens. Storing firearms securely protects any child in the home as well as students throughout the school district and community.

Learn more and download helpful resources; including a secure storage fact sheet, information about talking to your children about guns, and facts and resources on child firearm suicide, at www.besmartforkids.org/secure-gun-storage/resources/.



- 🔒 **Secure** all guns in your home and vehicles;
- 🔒 **Model** responsible behavior around guns;
- 🔒 **Ask** about the presence of unsecured guns in other homes;
- 🔒 **Recognize** the role of guns in suicide; and
- 🔒 **Tell** your peers to be SMART.

Focus on School Building Safety

The safety of our students is our top priority. All members of our school community have a role in school safety, and knowing how to respond in the event of an emergency is an important part of this. Please review this information carefully and make sure your family has a plan in case of an emergency. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your child's school directly.

Common Language

The Standard Response Protocol (SRP) used in our buildings uses clear language and is based on the following actions.



HOLD

In a hold, the movement of staff and students is limited while there is a short term emergency in the building that is handled. During a hold, regular school business continues as usual within classrooms.



SECURE LOCKOUT

A secure lockout is used to secure the school buildings or grounds during incidents that may pose a threat outside of the school building. This ensures all students are safe inside the building and no one can enter from the outside.



LOCKDOWN

A lockdown is used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence inside or around the school. The primary objective of a lockdown is to quickly ensure all school staff, students and visitors are secured in rooms away from immediate danger.



EVACUATE

Evacuation takes place if it is determined that it is safer outside than inside the building. For example, there may be a fire, explosion or hazardous materials spill. In an evacuation, all students, staff and visitors are able to safely reach the evacuation location without danger.



SHELTER

A shelter is called when students and staff are required to remain indoors, perhaps for an extended period of time, because it is safer inside the building than outside. Hazards might include weather or other environmental concerns.



Expectations of Parents & Families

- In the event of an emergency, communications will be sent from the district to families via text, e-mail and phone call when we have accurate and appropriate information to share. Updates will be posted on the district website as needed.
- In the event of an emergency situation, DO NOT rush to the school. This will create additional traffic and may impede emergency vehicles or otherwise disrupt response procedures.
- DO NOT CALL your student on their cell phone. Silence may be important in case there is an emergency and students need to focus on following instructions from adults at school.
- Please avoid speculating about emergency situations on social media, as this can cause more panic and disruption.
- If a situation requires transporting students to an alternate site, parents/guardians will be informed of that location via the district's messaging system and the website.
- Students may be held at an alternate site until release is approved by the district or public safety officials. Students will only be released to authorized individuals.

How can YOU prepare for an emergency?

- Have an early dismissal plan and make sure your child is aware of it, including where they will go and who will be waiting for them at the bus stop. Make sure emergency "backup" contacts (e.g. grandparents, neighbors) know their role.
- All parents/guardians MUST keep their emergency contact information and school records updated. If you have any questions, please contact the school's main offices.
- Make sure your student knows his/her bus number, regardless of if they take the bus on a regular basis. Buses may be used to transport all students in an emergency and it is important they know the number.

Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines

The Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG) is an evidence-based model developed by Dr. Dewey Cornell to violence prevention model that the district began using during the 2024-25 school year. It is recognized by the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP) and is the preferred resource for threat assessment models in New York state schools by the New York Center for School Safety.

For families, CSTAG means that your child's school has a standardized procedure for responding to student threats of violence. Key staff members including building administrators, mental health staff and a member of law enforcement are trained to use CSTAG to assess the seriousness of a potential threat and prevent harm. The process is not about punishing students, but instead aims to provide interventions and support and safety plans for students in crisis. Parents/guardians are contacted and included in this safety planning. In serious cases, law enforcement may be involved. Schools that use CSTAG have seen a reduction in fighting, violence, bullying, and suspensions, and an increase in counseling services, a positive school climate, and faculty and staff feel safer.

Safety Plans and Training in Niskayuna Schools

A districtwide safety plan and individual school safety plans are established annually. Staff and student training is a critical component of implementing the plans. Each year, students and staff are required to complete four lockdown and eight fire drills. The goal is to ensure that all are well-versed in safety procedures and protocols. These drills and procedures will continue to evolve based on best practices and our work with law enforcement. In compliance with the New York State Education Department, we are focused on ensuring they are trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate and do not include props, actors, simulations or other tactics intended to mimic a school emergency. Buildings will also communicate in advance of drills with families.



In the event of an emergency, communications will be sent from the district to families via text, email and phone call when we have accurate and appropriate information to share.



Tips for talking with children about school safety procedures

Whether it's on the news or related to a drill or incident at school, students may have concerns or questions related to their safety at times. School counselors and social workers are available to support your child. Reach out if you need help.

- Remind students that schools are safe places. Our school staff works with local police, including our own school resource officer, fire departments, emergency responders and medical professionals to keep them safe.
- Children should tell an adult they trust if they see or hear something that makes them feel uncomfortable, nervous or frightened.
- At times it may be wise to limit the students' exposure to the media.
- Try to stay calm and answer questions the best that you can.
- When something upsets a child, keeping a routine and doing activities they enjoy is often helpful.
- There are opportunities for students to play a positive role in the school and community, through clubs, other activities or just by helping classmates.
- Adapted from tips and resources provided by The National Association of School Psychologists.

Food Services



We take pride in serving healthy, delicious meals every day. Menus are posted on the district website and can be translated through our online food service system LINQ Connect.

Students eat for free in 2026-27

All students in our district are eligible to receive one free breakfast and one free lunch every day as part of a new state law. A second full meal can be purchased at the full prices listed below. Additional items can also be purchased a la carte.

2026-27 Meal Prices

Breakfast

Elementary School – FREE (\$2.25)

Middle School – FREE (\$2.50)

High School – FREE (\$2.50)

Lunch

Elementary School – FREE (\$3.50)

Middle School – FREE (\$3.75)

High School – FREE (\$3.75)

Free or Reduced Price School Meals Application

All families are encouraged to complete the free or reduced price meal application even though meals are free for all students this school year. Only one application is needed per household. When families qualify for free or reduced price meals, there are additional benefits, which may include the following at free or reduced cost:

- AP, SAT or ACT exam fees.
- College application fees.
- College courses taken in high school.

Scan the QR code to submit your application. Your application will be sent to the Niskayuna Central School District. Paper applications are available by contacting Director of Food and Nutrition Ross Tuskey at rtuskey@niskyschools.org or (518) 598-8151.

Scan the QR code to complete the free and reduced price school meals application.



LINQ Connect

Although meals are free, families may wish to have extra money on their student's account. To view and manage your student's meal account, you must create a login on LINQ Connect at www.linqconnect.com. You can also download the LINQ Connect app on Google Play or the Apple App Store to view menus and manage your student's meal account.

LINQ Connect can be used to:

- Set low-balance reminders.
- Set up automatic meal payments and transfer funds between students.
- Create spending limits for the account.
- View school lunch menus.

Please note, LINQ Connect charges a transaction fee for each transfer of funds to your meal account from an external payment source such as your credit/debit card. Deposits to your meal account may be made by cash or check to your child's school with no fee. View www.niskayunaschools.org/student-services/food-and-nutrition/ for payment details.

Director of Food and Nutrition

Ross Tuskey

Phone: (518) 598-8151

Email: rtuskey@niskyschools.org

Manage your LINQ Connect Account

Visit www.linqconnect.com to view and manage your student's meal account. You will need to create a new login if this is your first time using the platform.



Letter to Parents for School Meal Programs

Niskayuna CSD - Letter to Parents for School Meal Programs

Special Provision Options (Provision 2 Non-Base Year & Community Eligibility Provision)

Dear Parent or Guardian:

We are pleased to inform you that Niskayuna CSD will be offering meals at no cost to schools participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs for 2026-2027.

What does this mean for your child(ren) attending the school(s) identified above?

All students enrolled at Niskayuna CSD schools are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at school at no charge to your household each day of the 2026-2027 school year. Your child(ren) will be able to participate in these meal programs without having to pay a fee or submitting an application. No further action is required of you.

If you have any further questions, please contact Susan Frank at susan.frank@neric.org.

Sincerely,

Ross Tuskey

Senior School Lunch Director

Nondiscrimination Statement:

This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the state or local agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Transportation



We proudly transport Niskayuna students to and from school, athletic events and activities safely and efficiently! Remember, at the start of a new year, it takes time to settle into the routes, and buses typically do not run right on schedule for the opening days. We appreciate your patience. Please review your designated bus route, stop and pick up time in PowerSchool and contact the Transportation Department directly at (518) 370-0160 with questions. Transportation changes will require a minimum of one week to take effect.

Transportation Information for 2026-27

- Transportation will be provided from a single location and to a single location for each student for both the morning and afternoon with the exception of students who are riding designated district buses to established childcare providers in the afternoon.
- Established childcare locations that we will transport to in the afternoon are: Capital Church, Capital Kids Care, St. Kateri's, Schenectady Jewish Community Center, Villa Fusco Day Care and Wiggles and Giggles Child Care. Parents may designate an established childcare location and the day(s) their child will be transported there after school and the day(s) their child will be transported on their regular bus route. In order for this to happen, families must complete and return the "Transportation Request to Childcare Locations" form that is on the district website.
- Other than going to these childcare locations, students will only ride their regular, designated bus route. There will be no bus passes and/or riding to friends' houses on other routes.
- If you have any questions, contact the director of transportation.

Who are our bus drivers?

Before they ever transport a single student, the bus driver has:

- Undergone over 70 hours of training.
- Been fingerprinted (criminal background check) and drug tested.
- Taken a DMV road test, followed by a Niskayuna CSD road test.
- Taken a "physical performance test" that tests coordination and strength.
- Had a physical.
- After all this, every year they do a Defensive Driving Review, a physical, and two mandated driver "refreshers." They also are subject to random drug and alcohol testing.
- Every other year they must take the road test, physical performance test, and written test.

Transportation Department

1301 Hillside Avenue
Niskayuna, NY 12309
Phone: (518) 370-0160

Richard Kirk, Director

Email: transportation@niskayschools.org

We're hiring!

Are you a safety-minded person who enjoys making a difference? Are you looking for work that follows the school calendar, with holidays off?

Driving a school bus may be a great fit for you! Pay starts at \$26.25 per hour for full time runs and \$25 for substitutes. We operate a standardized, well-maintained bus fleet with low mileage. You would be part

of a skilled, highly-motivated and dedicated team. Consider joining us.

For more information about becoming a bus driver, visit www.niskayunaschools.org/employment/becoming-a-school-bus-driver/ or scan the QR code.



Weather-Related Closures & Delays

The Niskayuna Central School District has established protocols for deciding whether to close or delay school or cancel activities due to inclement weather. The district uses several information channels to communicate this information with parents and community members.

Information Sources for School Closings, Delays and Early Dismissals

If there are any changes in school operation hours, the district uses several information vehicles to inform parents and community members, as outlined below. School is open on its usual schedule unless otherwise announced.

- **ParentSquare Alerts:** Parents will automatically receive emails through ParentSquare, and can register for text and/or app notifications.
- **District Website:** Weather notices are posted on the homepage.
- **Local Media Stations and Websites:** Notifications will be sent to local media stations and websites, including Channel 6, Spectrum News Channel 9, Channel 10, Fox 23, WFLY (92.3 FM), WGNA (107.7 FM), WGY (810 AM), WYJB (B95.5), WRVE (99.5 FM), the Daily Gazette and the Times Union. Consider relying on more than one information source, particularly in situations where weather may cause power outages.

District Protocols for Closing and Delaying School or Canceling Activities

Closing School for the Entire Day: If it appears that students cannot be transported safely to school or home at the end of the day, Niskayuna schools will not open. The district will make every attempt to announce snow days or delays by 5:30 a.m.

Delayed Start of the School Day: When conditions warrant, we may add a two-hour delay to the start of the school day. When there is a two-hour delay, the bus will arrive two hours later than the usual pickup time. When a two-hour delay is called, the district retains the option to close school for the full day. This decision will be made by 7 a.m., and communicated promptly. The district's philosophy is to avoid one-hour delays.

Afterschool and Evening Activities: If students cannot be transported to and from afternoon and/or evening activities safely, they will be canceled. Although it is not always possible, our goal is to make afterschool activities decisions by 12:30 p.m., and evening activities decisions by 2 p.m.

Early Dismissal During Inclement Weather

The district's philosophy is to avoid early dismissal. We do not



Special Note About Emergency Days

As of this publication, our plan for this year is that any days where inclement weather prevents students and staff from safely coming to school will be "traditional snow days" and not remote learning days. The calendar for the year has some days built into it for this purpose.

want parents rushing home on less than ideal roadways, and we believe that keeping children at school is often the best way to keep them safe during bad weather. However, in the event that this is necessary, notification will be made as early in the day as possible.

Wind Chills and Cold Temperatures

Severe climate conditions where temperatures and wind chills dip into certain extreme ranges can cause safety concerns. When wind chills approaching -25 degrees are predicted, the district may be placed on a cold weather alert. When persistent wind chills of -25 degrees or below are predicted, we are likely to delay or close school, consistent with guidance from the New York Statewide School Health Services Center.

Heat Concerns

Similar to cold weather precautions, the district will monitor the heat index and classroom temperatures to ensure comfortable and safe conditions. The district follows New York State Education Department policy related to safe classroom temperatures.

Additional Information About Cancellations

Unless otherwise announced, when school is closed for the day or there is an early dismissal, all afterschool and athletic activities and evening events, including Continuing Education classes, are canceled and the pool at Niskayuna High School is closed.

Code of Conduct Summary

The Code of Conduct serves as a guide to good citizenship, promoting positive behavior and helping students understand expectations, which are based on mutual respect, citizenship, character, acceptance, honesty and integrity. The Code of Conduct reflects how we can all work together to support our students and their growth and development.

K-12 code of conduct emphasizes these guiding principles:

- Restorative practices
- Diversity and equity
- Social and emotional learning
- Pro-social behavior
- Student engagement
- Expectations, respect and accountability



Summary of Key Aspects of the Code of Conduct

- The code of conduct highlights rights and responsibilities of students; parents, guardians and caregivers; educators, principals, the superintendent and the board of education.
- All students have the right to a sound, quality education in a school environment that is safe, orderly and promotes learning.
- All students have the responsibility to be active participants in their learning, attend school daily, arrive on time and be prepared to learn.
- All visitors to the school must report to the main office to sign in and observe the Code of Conduct. Anyone who is on school property when they are not supposed to be will be reported to the school principal and asked to leave.
- Every student should do his or her own work. It is often important in school work to give credit to other sources of information like the Internet or books. Teachers will talk to students about how to give credit to other information sources.
- The possession of drugs, drug paraphernalia, synthetic narcotics, non-prescribed medications, alcohol or the consumption of drugs or alcohol during school hours or at any interscholastic or co-curricular event is strictly prohibited.
- All forms of harassment, discrimination, hazing, bullying and cyberbullying are strictly prohibited in our schools.
- Both words and physical actions that harm others can result in student discipline. Activity that takes place off of school property, including on the Internet and social media sites, can carry consequences in school for students if the behavior disrupts the school environment.
- Weapons, including any object that appears to be a weapon, are not allowed at school. Students who bring a weapon to school can be suspended.
- It is against the law for anyone to make a bomb threat against a school in New York.

Levels of Behavior and Responses

The code of conduct outlines levels of behavioral infractions and potential consequences. In determining how to best address inappropriate, unacceptable and unskillful behavior, we know it is necessary to evaluate all of the circumstances surrounding the behavior. Consequences will then be paired with meaningful instruction and guidance to offer students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Level 1	Teacher and/or staff interaction to teach correct behavior and promote self-discipline and healthy well-being.
Level 2	Administrative intervention to address more serious and disruptive actions.
Level 3	Administrative intervention and short-term removal for violations that potentially jeopardize order, safety and property.
Level 4	Intensive administrative intervention and lengthier removal from the learning environment when safety and well-being of others is threatened.
Level 5	Intensive district administration intervention and discipline with potential long-term removal from school or alternative placement for actions that may involve force and result in harm, injury or violence.

All members of the school community must assume a role in promoting behavior that enhances academic and personal success. Courteous, respectful and responsible behavior fosters a positive climate and one that promotes learning. Interventions and consequences will be implemented in a culturally responsive and consistent manner across all schools and grade levels.

Students and families should know that the school will provide interventions inside and outside the classroom that support a restorative, rather than punitive, response. Our belief is that by addressing issues from a restorative perspective, we can guide students when their actions are less serious and minimize more severe behavior and responses.



For a complete copy of the Code of Conduct visit the Niskayuna website or scan the QR code.



Dignity for All Students Act

You should feel safe at school. People should treat other people the way they would like to be treated. You should be able to learn, do your work, and have fun and be part of activities without worrying about the words or actions of others making you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. We are all different, but no one should be treated differently because of things like how they look or what their family does. It is against school rules to make anyone else feel threatened or unsafe.

A law known as the Dignity for All Students Act focuses on making sure that you and your classmates are safe and feel safe at school. It is wrong for students to be teased or treated differently because of their actual or perceived race (including traits associated with race such as hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression), or sex. Every school principal is in charge of working with everyone at school to create a safe and supportive environment. If anyone is saying or doing things that are making you or others feel unsafe or uncomfortable, you should tell your principal or another adult at school. They are there to help you learn and make sure you feel safe. The Dignity for All Act Coordinator for each school is the principal. Contact information is on the district website.

Policies & Notifications



Access of Military Recruiters to Student Information

In accordance with the No Child Left Behind law, the Niskayuna Central School District must release secondary school students' names, addresses and telephone listings to military recruiters or institutions of higher education, unless the students or their parents/guardians request in writing that such information not be released. If you would not like this information released, please notify Niskayuna High School Counseling Center Secretary Jaclyn Allen in writing at jallen@niskayschools.org, 1626 Balltown Road, Niskayuna, NY 12309, by Oct. 1 of each year.

Asbestos Management Plan

In accordance with the EPA Asbestos Hazardous Emergency Response Act, the district has in place an asbestos management plan to identify and manage asbestos building materials. The Asbestos Management Plan for the district is available at the District Office. Information about required inspections and any scheduled asbestos project occurring this school year is contained within the Asbestos Management Plan.

Attendance Policy

Students are entitled to a sound basic education that will enable them to enjoy life and become effective citizens. This is best achieved by regular class participation. The Attendance Policy recognizes the relationship between participation in class activities and the mastery of course material. Class attendance is recorded and reported to parents at the end of each marking period, or more frequently if needed. Principals work with staff members to regularly review student attendance and develop building and individual plans to address any issues in partnership with students and families. Reasons for excused tardiness or absences are: Personal illness or injury, death or emergency illness in the immediate family, obligatory religious observance, required court appearance, medical and dental appointments, school sponsored events, college visits and interviews, career development or exploration programs approved by the principal, driver's road test (not permit tests), late arriving bus,

impassable roads or weather making travel unsafe, music lessons, or others as authorized by the principal. Tardiness or absence for any other reason is unexcused. Students with an excused absence shall be given an opportunity to make up missed work. Students with unexcused absences shall be subject to the sanctions provided by the Code of Conduct. Parents shall be notified by phone or by letter whenever their child is absent, tardy or departs early without a proper excuse. Additional actions shall be taken for students with severe attendance problems, as outlined in the Code of Conduct.

Body Mass Index

As part of a required school health examination, a student is weighed and his/her height is measured. These numbers are used to figure out the student's body mass index or 'BMI'. The state requires BMI and weight status group be included as part of the student's school health examination. A sample of school districts will be selected to take part in a survey by the State Department of Health. If our school is selected to be part of the survey, we will be reporting information about our students' weight status groups. Only summary information is sent; no names and no information about individual students are sent. However, you may choose to have your child's information excluded from this survey report. Please contact your school nurse if this is the case.

Child Abuse Hotline Information

If you suspect a child is being abused or maltreated (neglected), report it by calling 1-800-342-3720, a toll-free 24-hour hotline operated by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. If you believe a child is in immediate danger, call 911 or your local police department. Information about reporting child abuse and maltreatment is available online at <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cps/>.

Dress Code

NCSD encourages self-expression through clothing, but prioritizes safety and learning. Students and parents are primarily responsible for dress code adherence. Staff should exemplify professional attire and guide students towards appropriate attire. The dress code prohibits vulgar, offensive, discriminatory, or substance-promoting clothing.

(continued)

It also bans attire that depicts violence or disrupts the learning environment. The goal is to create a comfortable and inclusive learning environment where students can express themselves freely without fear of judgment or unnecessary discipline. Further details are available on the district site via the QR code on page 20 of this booklet.

Insurance

School district accident insurance covers students for accidents that occur during school activities. It is non-duplicating coverage, meaning the family must first file with its own health and accident insurance plan. Forms for medical expenses that are not thus covered may be obtained from the school nurse at the child's school.

Participation in Graduation Ceremonies by All Eligible Students

New York State Education Law requires the Niskayuna Central School District to inform students and parents/guardians of the district's policy that all eligible students are allowed to participate in a high school graduation ceremony and associated graduation activities with their graduating class (i.e., the 12th-grade class with which such student entered into ninth grade). This includes students who have been awarded a Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential or Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential.

Protection of Pupil Rights

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment provides parents/guardians with certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. In particular, if a survey is funded in whole or part by the U.S. Department of Education, parents/guardians have the right to consent before students are required to complete a survey that asks about any of eight protected areas: political affiliations or beliefs; mental or psychological problems; sexual behavior or attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships; legally recognized privileged relationships; religious practices; or income.

Parents/guardians will also receive a notice and an opportunity to opt students out of: any other survey that asks about the above protected areas; any non-emergency, invasive physical exam/screening with the exception of physical exams or screenings required or permitted by state law (e.g. hearing, vision, or scoliosis); and activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing. Parents/guardians have the right to inspect any surveys that ask about the above protected areas, as well as surveys created by third parties to collect personal information from students for marketing purposes, and instructional materials used as part of the curriculum. Parents/guardians will also be provided with reasonable notification of specific activities or surveys covered by this policy and the ability to opt their child out. Anyone who believes their rights have been violated may file a complaint with: Family Policy Compliance Office; U.S. Department of Education; 400 Maryland Avenue, SW; Washington, D.C. 20202.

Prohibition of Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment, Hazing and Retaliation

The Board of Education is committed to providing an educational and working environment that promotes respect, dignity and equality. Board policy prohibits all acts of discrimination, harassment and bullying (including cyberbullying), as well as retaliation, by anyone on school property or at school functions. Acts of discrimination, harassment, hazing bullying or retaliatory behavior should be reported to any staff member, administrator, or the Title VII/Title IX Officer, Chief Equity Officer Latisha Barnett, lbarnett@niskayschools.org or (518) 377-4666, ext. 50741. Inquiries concerning policies regarding harassment and discrimination should also be directed toward the Title VII/Title IX Officer. Copies of the Board of Education policies are available in the District Office, in all school main offices, and on the district website.

Prohibition of Sexual Harassment

The Niskayuna Board of Education has a policy prohibiting sexual harassment in the Niskayuna Central School District. Sexual harassment is generally defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Any student, employee or school district officer who believes sexual harassment has occurred should report the alleged misconduct immediately so that corrective action may be taken as necessary. Students or parents should report any alleged misconduct to the Title VII/Title IX Officer, Chief Equity Officer Latisha Barnett, lbarnett@niskayschools.org or (518) 377-4666, ext. 50741, or the building principals. Employees should report any alleged misconduct to the Director of Human Resources. The District recognizes that sexual harassment is a sensitive issue and that students may choose to inform any trusted staff member of suspected discrimination or harassment. The School District will act to promptly, thoroughly, and equitably investigate all complaints, whether verbal or written, of sexual harassment and will promptly take appropriate action to protect individuals from further sexual harassment. All such complaints will be handled in a manner consistent with the District's policies, procedures, and/or regulations regarding the investigation of discrimination and harassment complaints. The sexual harassment policy and guidelines are available in school offices or through Title VII/Title IX Officer Chief Equity Officer Latisha Barnett, lbarnett@niskayschools.org or (518) 377-4666, ext. 50741.

Meal Charge Policy and Unpaid Charges

Important Note About Free Meals: The district's approach to allowing students to charge meals and unpaid charges is summarized below. However, beginning with the 2025-26 school year, all district schools will participate in the USDA Food and Nutrition Service's Provision 2 program, which allows the district to offer free meals to all students. Under this program, each student may receive one free breakfast and one free lunch per school day. Additional meals or other food items may be purchased, but payment is required at the point of sale. The district does not allow charging for these "a la carte" items when a student's account has insufficient funds. This policy is expected to greatly reduce or eliminate the occurrence of unpaid meal charges.

The district's approach to meal charges and handling unpaid charges is addressed in Board of Education Policy No. 5660. The District's point-of-sale system tracks all charges and payments. A la carte items, second meals, adult meals or similar items cannot be charged. Parents will continue to be notified if their child's account balance is exhausted and in the event any unpaid meal charges are due. The District will not publicly identify a student who cannot pay for an item, who has accrued meal debt, discuss any outstanding meal debt in the presence of other students, or take any action directed at a pupil to collect unpaid meal fees. If applicable, unpaid meal charges will be addressed directly with the student's parent or guardian who is responsible for providing funds for meal purchases. Such outreach will include attempting to determine if the student is eligible for free meals.

Idling of Vehicle Engines on School Grounds

State law requires school districts to take steps to minimize the idling of the engines of school buses and other school vehicles on school grounds. While students are boarding and departing school buses, the engine should be turned off. Students should be instructed about the importance of getting on and off buses in an orderly and efficient fashion to minimize loading and offloading time. Bus engines should also be off while parked at sporting events and other school activities. Exceptions can be made in cases of emergency, mechanical issues or for necessary heating.

Safe Schools Plan

Under the New York State Project SAVE law (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education), the Niskayuna Central School District has adopted a district-wide safe schools plan. Approved by the Board of Education, the plan consolidates many existing district safety procedures as well as new information required by Project SAVE. Items in the comprehensive plan include: district-wide safe schools plan, information about building-level safety plans, codes of conduct, emergency response plans, a character education plan, crisis response procedures and building safety team responsibilities. The district plan is available on the website.

Student Evaluation, Promotion and Placement

Decisions about student promotion and placement are at the discretion of the school administration. These decisions are guided by recommendations of teachers and staff members, past academic performance, and parent/guardian input. Past academic performance refers to a variety of indicators of student achievement and growth. Promotion and placement decisions are not based solely on student performance on New York state assessments in grades 3-8 English language arts or mathematics. Parents and/or persons in parental relation to students shall receive an appropriate report of student progress at regular intervals. The District will not include on a student's official transcript or maintain in a student's permanent record any individual student score on a state administered standardized English language arts or mathematics assessment for grades 3 through 8. The district's promotion and placement policy was adopted by the board of education following a review by the district administration.

Student Records

The board of education recognizes the importance of accurate student records and the need to maintain confidentiality in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). With respect to a student's educational records, parents have the right to: inspect and review educational records of their children; request the amendment of records the parent/eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights; the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information in the student's education records, except information that can be disclosed without consent; and the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Dept. of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with FERPA. The full Student Records policy can be obtained from the District Office or on the district's website.

Release of Student Information

The district may release student information defined as "directory information" without prior written consent, unless otherwise notified by parents. The district has designated directory information as: student's name, home address(es), telephone number(s), date and place of birth, honors and awards, participation in recognized activities, dates of attendance, grade and school of attendance, teacher name and class lists, future educational plans, names of parents/guardians, parent email addresses, and student photo/video. Examples of the use of information include: release to the news media, in district communications such as the website, official social media sites and district newsletters and to assist with PTO-compiled school directories. Parents/guardians who do not want their child's directory information to be released should notify the building principal at the school and notify the superintendent of schools (Niskayuna Central School District, 1430 Balltown Road, Niskayuna, NY, 12309) by Oct. 1 of each year.

While the district will honor the request of any parent who has submitted written notification opting their child out of publicity efforts, the district is not responsible for media that covers news happenings, sporting events, or other school events that are open to the public such as plays and musical performances.

Use of Pesticides & Request for Notification

The Niskayuna Central School District uses an Integrated Pest Management approach to control structural and landscape pests and to minimize pesticide exposure to students, employees and visitors. While infrequent, in the event that conditions warrant a pesticide application, it is performed by state-licensed applicators and the district maintains a copy of the label of each pesticide used. The district maintains a registry of all individuals who request to receive 48-hour prior notification of pesticide applications on school property. To receive these notifications, please contact the Niskayuna Central School District Communications Office, or communications@niskayschools.org.

Niskayuna

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Back-to-School

Startup Guide

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