



**Nathan Hale Elementary
School**

**Student/Family Handbook
2025 - 2026**

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Staff Directory

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Specialists

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Classroom Staff

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Support Staff

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Faiza Bodden-Boyce, ESL/ Inclusion Specialist
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Allison DePina, K-3 Interventionist
Adepina3@bostonpublicschools.org

Logistics

School Hours

The building hours are 8:15 a.m. – 3:10 p.m. Teachers are on duty at 8:15 a.m. Students should not be left unsupervised before 8:15 a.m. Students are invited to have breakfast beginning at 8:15 a.m. The school day ends at 3:10 p.m., and late pick-up ends at 3:25 p.m. Any students not picked up by then will be taken to the main office, and families will be called. If we are unable to reach parents or emergency contacts, the district is called at 4 p.m. for further directions.

School Calendar

The Boston Public School district calendar which contains all the holidays and school vacation information can be found at: [Boston Public Schools District Calendar](#). We publish a monthly family newsletter on Parentsquare that will keep you informed of programs and activities taking place at the Hale school.

Transportation

Elementary students (KO to grade 5) who live more than 1 mile from the Hale and Sixth-grade students who live more than 1.5 miles from the Hale will receive a yellow school bus transportation assignment. BPS will mail a letter to your house in August with information on the bus numbers, stops, and times.

Bus Location and Concerns:

- Please download the [Zum](#) application that allows you to see your child's bus assignment and location. The BPS Transportation Department is responsible for all logistics concerning students' departure and arrival.
- If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Transportation Parent Support Line at 617-635-9520.

Bus Rules:

- Only those students assigned to the bus will be allowed on board.
- In the morning, all students must be at the designated bus stop per their schedule.
- All students must be respectful to the bus driver and follow safety instructions.
- Students must remain seated on the bus and must not open any windows without permission.
- Please remind your student never to cross behind the bus or to play near the tires or slide off snow banks near the street.
- Good conduct is a must on the bus. Remember, the [BPS Code of Conduct](#) also applies to the bus.
- No eating or drinking on the bus.

The driver will report any violations of bus rules to the principal. Riding the school bus is a privilege, and improper conduct may result in that privilege being revoked or denied. Encourage your child to share any bus incident they are concerned about with you and their teacher.

Arrival & Dismissal

Arrival

All students are expected to be on the blacktop by 8:15 AM at their designated area. Students who want to have breakfast will enter via the cafeteria. All others will use the main door to get to their classroom.

Per BPS policy, parents will not be allowed to take students to the classrooms and they must say goodbye outside.

Breakfast takes place in the cafeteria. The learning day begins at 8:30, and all students should be in their classrooms. Students who arrive at the school after 8:30 a.m. are considered late and must be signed in by an adult at the main office- this does not apply to students who are eating breakfast by 8:30 a.m. Repeat tardiness will result in a family meeting with the attendance team to develop a plan to get to school on time.

Dismissal

- Students are dismissed at 3:10 p.m. We ask that parents please wait **outside** the wall/ fence on Lambert and / or Cedar streets and that you make sure their teacher sees you before taking your student(s). Repeated early pickups will result in a family meeting with the attendance team to develop a plan to dismiss on time.

Early Dismissal / Dismissal Changes

If you need to pick your child up early or change their mode of dismissal, please call the main office at 617-635-8205 or send an email to vthomas@bostonpublicschools.org to inform them by noon (12pm). Teachers often do not have time or the ability to check messages during the school day as they are teaching -- **ALL dismissal changes must be called into the office. No students will be dismissed later than 2:50 p.m.**, as students may be in transition and that is when we begin getting ready for dismissal. Thank you for understanding.

Champions Before and After School Program

Kindercare partners with our school to provide Before and After-school care for KO/ K1 through grade 6 students. Hours of operation are from 7:00 a.m. to 8:15 a. m. and 3:15 to 6:00 p.m.

Please contact Site Director, Walidah Gilbert at (617) 608-8244, walidah.gilbert@discoverchampions.com, or visit their website for more information; <https://www.discoverchampions.com/>.

Attendance

Please Note: The district sends out automated messages to families of *all* students who are absent or tardy, regardless if you have excused the absence or not.

Improving and maintaining consistently high, on-time student attendance is essential. Students cannot take full advantage of academic and extra-curricular opportunities unless they are in school on a consistent basis.

In accordance with the Boston Public Schools attendance policy, the following are reasons for absences to be excused:

- An illness or injury that prevents the student from attending school.
- Medical or psychological tests or appointments during the school day (documentation from provider must be provided).
- A death in the immediate family.
- Significant personal or family crisis.
- Religious or cultural holiday (for more information, see Superintendent's Circular ACA-18 and LGL-6).
- Court appearances (documentation from court must be provided).
- Visits to special education schools in some cases for students with disabilities.
- Other extraordinary situations, as approved by the school principal.

MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION

- If an illness or hospitalization results in a student's absence for three or more consecutive days, documentation from a medical provider noting the health problem or hospitalization should be provided.
- Additional medical documentation may be requested for students who meet the criteria for '*chronic absenteeism*' (*missing 10% or more of the school year in any given period*).
- Under [BPS Policy \(ACA-18\)](#), upon return to school, the note must be provided no later than seven (7) school days after the last absence.
- **Notes received after seven (7) school days may result in an absence remaining UNEXCUSED.**
- Students being dismissed due to *undocumented medical reasons (e.g., feeling sick)* should check in with the Nurses' Office prior to departure in order to be considered for an **excused dismissal**.

MAKE UP WORK

- Please make arrangements with the student's teacher **within two (2) school days after the last date of absence to make up for any missed work.**

- Work completed without submitting appropriate documentation **within seven (7) school days** of the absence may **lose make-up privileges**.
- It is also expected that parents communicate with teachers in advance of the absence if the absence is known ahead of time.

All supporting documentation must be submitted by a caregiver of record to Ms. Vickie at vthomas@bostonpublicschools.org

Students with repeated absences, excused or unexcused, will be placed on **attendance plans**. These plans may include signing an attendance contract, participating in a family attendance meeting, or participating in a home visit. In serious cases, repeated absences can result in referral to court, as school attendance is a requirement of the State of Massachusetts. Students who miss more than 20% of the school year will be eligible for retention in the same grade level at the end of the year.

Uniform Policy

Tops

- **Polo shirts (Short or Long Sleeve):** Light blue, white, or dark/navy blue. Must cover the stomach when hands are raised.
- **T-shirts (Short or Long Sleeve):** Light blue, white, or dark/navy blue. Must cover the stomach when hands are raised.
- **Sweaters and hoodies:** Dark blue, light blue or white.

Bottoms

- **Pants, shorts, dresses &/or skirts (must all be at least knee length):** Navy blue, black, or khaki (solid colored, no visible logos).
- **Physical Education Sweatpants:** Navy blue, gray, black (solid colored, no visible logos). These can be worn on any day, including PE days.
- **Leggings / Tights:** Only if worn with a skirt, dress, or shorts.

If a student comes to school not in uniform they will be sent to the office and asked to change. They will be given a uniform to return. We will have periodic spirit weeks /days when students do not need to be in uniform. Notification will be sent home for these activities.

Where to purchase:

- [Stars Branding](#)
- Walmart/ Target for non-branded uniform tops and bottoms

Appropriate Use of Technology

All Hale students are expected to appropriately use technology. All personal electronic devices should be kept off during the school day. When using school technology (Chromebooks, computers, etc) students must adhere to the [BPS Acceptable Use Policy](#) and use the devices for class assignments and learning only.

Cell phones and smart watches

Per [BPS Policy](#), the use of cell phones for any purpose – including telephone calls, text messaging and other functions – is not permitted at any time on school grounds. Cell phones and smart watches will be collected by the homeroom teacher at arrival, and returned at dismissal. If you need to contact your student, please call the main office at 617-635-8205.

Breakfast & Lunch

All students receive breakfast and lunch. Students are welcome to bring a lunch as long as it follows the Healthy Snack and Beverage Policy below:

- Students are required to eat part of a lunch entrée before consuming snacks of lower nutritional value.
- Students who do not have a lunch entrée will be provided a school lunch.
- Students **may not** bring drink sweeteners like Kool Aid to add to their water. Nor can students have caffeinated or high sugar beverages at school. High sugar content is 20% or more of daily value (DV) according to the FDA ([see here for details](#)).
- Gum will not be allowed at school, even at lunch or recess time.

- We ask parents **NOT** to send candy into the school.
- Food and drink that does not follow the policy will be confiscated and thrown away.

Snack and Beverage Policy

Compliance with the Hale Healthy Snack and Beverage policy is the responsibility of our entire community of staff, students, and parents. Snacks or drinks will not be allowed during classes, except water. You can only eat in the cafeteria during lunch or designated snack times by the teacher. This policy is in place to ensure cleanliness and prevent rodent infestations. All students have snacks at least once a week through our fresh fruits and vegetables program and many early grade levels provide a daily snack depending on when lunch occurs. We are a “nut aware” school and if allergies exist in your child's grade level you will be notified by the teacher.

Food Items Not Allowed

Students are NOT permitted to eat or drink the following items at school:

- Soda
- Energy drinks
- Coffee or caffeinated beverages
- Hot chocolate
- Candy
- Fast food delivered to school by families or delivery services during the school day
- Highly sugary drinks such as coolatas, refreshers or slushies. High sugar content is 20% or more of daily value (DV) according to the FDA ([see here for details](#))
- Any drink in glass bottles

If any foods or drinks from the not allowed list are brought to school they will be confiscated.

Birthday Celebration Policy

We love to celebrate our students at the Hale. If a child has a birthday on a school day, teachers do various things to make sure they feel special on their day (if they celebrate birthdays). This practice will continue.

For families that wish to send something for the class to enjoy, check in with the teacher at least two weeks in advance.

- On the birthday celebration day, families of students with a birthday in the month can send in the following options with **enough for the entire class**. Please reach out to your student's teacher to verify the number of students or to ask any questions:
 - Non-food items: stickers, bookmarks, mini party favors (fun pencils, erasers, mini cars/rings, etc)
- When sending invitations to school for out-of-school celebrations, teachers would only be able to distribute them when these include the whole classroom. **Please do not send invitations just for some students.**

Birthday non-food items can be dropped off to the office with the secretary. **Anything that does not follow the above policy will not be allowed.**

Medications/Nurse

If you have a student with allergies, medications or other health concerns, please be in contact with our School Nurse, Ryan Kelly at, rkelly5@bostonpublicschools.org, as early in the year as possible to ensure appropriate care.

- If your child (children) suffers from a medical condition requiring medications please deliver the doctor's orders, signed guardian authorization form and the medicine to the office. Do not place medications in the student's backpack.
- If your child (children) has a fever, cough (for several days), diarrhea, vomit, rash, Pediculosis (head lice) or an eye infection please take the student to the doctor and keep them home following these guidelines:
 - **Fever:** Students should not return to school until 24 hours fever free without the aid of medication.
 - **Diarrhea:** Students can return after 24 hours or sooner with direction from the doctor.

- **Vomiting:** Students can return after 24 hours of last episode or if child can tolerate a meal without vomiting.
- **Respiratory infection:** Students can return if they do not have a fever.
- **Strep throat or bacterial conjunctivitis (pink eye):** Students can return 24 hours after first dose of antibiotics / medication.
- If your child (children) has a stomach ache, diarrhea or vomiting keep them home until they are free of symptoms. Keep in mind that there might be a stomach flu going around the school and the community. Provide your child (children) with plenty of rest, liquids and love.

Family Engagement

Home - School Communication

- **Student Learning + Well-Being:** We encourage families to **contact teachers as the first point of contact with concerns about their child's learning or well-being.** If they would like support, our Family Liaison, Claudia Velazquez; cvelazquez@bostonpublicschools.org, is always available to facilitate communication and relationships.
- **Connection to Family Resources:** We encourage families to contact our Family Liaison for anything related to resources for families, whether it's student learning opportunities, or housing and food resources.
- **Conflict Resolution:** If there is a need to resolve a conflict, sensitive issue or misunderstanding with a teacher, family, or another student that has not been resolved yet through direct communication with that teacher, we encourage you to reach out to the following people:
 - Our Family Liaison, **Claudia Velazquez**, at cvelazquez@bostonpublicschools.org.
 - If the issue requires additional intervention **after contacting the above contacts**, please reach out to our School Principal, Rosa Esparza, at resparza@bostonpublicschools.org

Parent-Teacher Conferences

All students will have a Parent-Teacher Conference in the fall with their child's homeroom teacher. Additional conferences can be requested by a parent as needed. Students at risk of retention will have an additional Parent-Teacher Conference in the early Spring.

School Site Council (SSC)

School Site Council (SSC) is a group made up of the principal, parents, and teachers and responsible for decision-making at the school. SSC meets once per month and approves school rules, decides if students will wear uniforms, hires staff (through a Personnel Sub Committee), and may also request waivers from some BPS policies. Each year the SSC parent members are elected at SPC and the faculty members are elected at the Faculty Senate. All community members are welcome to SSC meetings.

The SSC meeting schedule will be shared on ParentSquare, on the school website, and will be posted in the school lobby following the elections in early October.

School Parent Council (SPC)

The SPC brings all parents in the school community together to support the school and advocate for quality education. As the parent or guardian of a BPS student, you are automatically a member of your School Parent Council. The SPC elects its volunteer leaders (co-chairs, treasurer, and secretaries), and takes steps to ensure that it is an active and diverse group representative of all school families.

The SPC goals:

- Support the Hale school in advocating, for improvements in educational opportunities, extracurriculars, grant writing, fundraising, organizing community events, school beautification projects, organizing the [Classroom Connectors](#) and much more.
- Elects representatives to serve on the School Site Council (SSC) and works closely with the SSC to review the school's budget, recommend programs, sponsor events, solve problems, and raise funds for special school activities.
- Chooses volunteer representatives to citywide councils including the Citywide Parent Council (CPC), the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPAC), and the District English Learners Advisory Committee (DELAC).

The SPC meeting schedule will be shared on ParentSquare, on the school website, and will be posted in the school lobby following the elections in early October.

School visits/tours

We are happy to have families visit or tour the school. If you would like a school tour please call the main office at (617) 635-8205 and ask for Claudia Velazquez. If you would like to visit your child's classroom, please make arrangements ahead of time with the classroom teacher. No families will be permitted to visit classrooms during the school day without an appointment beforehand so we can limit disruption to instructional time.

Volunteers/Chaperones

The Hale has long been a school driven by family volunteers and activism. This school year we hope to continue that tradition. Please reach out to our Family Liaison, Ms. V at cvelazquez@bostonpublicschools.org to sign up for a variety of volunteer opportunities:

- Classroom Connector
- Recess game facilitator
- After school volunteer
- Food pantry volunteer
- Lost and Found organizing
- Supply closet organizing
- School Beautification

If you are interested, we ask that you first fill out a CORI form online [here](#). Processing time is about two to three weeks, usually much longer at the beginning of the school year. Your CORI approval will be valid for one year. Any questions please contact our secretary, Vickie Thomas, at vthomas@bostonpublicschools.org or 617-635-8205.

Academics

Arts & Wellness Specialties

We are very proud to offer a full selection of arts and wellness specialty classes at the Hale. Specialist Teachers are those that see students once a week (sometimes twice) and provide access to specials, as well as outside partners.

- Ms. Washington, Music Teacher
- Mr. Arroyo, Science Teacher
- Ms. Bolden, Art/ Tech Teacher
- Mr. Hillier/ Physical Education Teacher
- Ms. Danni/ City Sprouts Farmer
- City Stage
- Boch Center
- Wakefield Estates

School Culture & Climate

Community Values

- Honesty
- Accountability
- Leadership
- Empathy

Consequences

In conjunction with the [BPS Code of Conduct](#) and our Restorative Justice practices, when students do not follow the expectations there are various consequences, such as loss of privileges, community service, and strategic reflection time. **BPS policy prohibits removing recess as a consequence from K1-8th. We do reserve the right to place students in alternative recess spaces if their presence with their cohort presents a safety issue, but will provide them with movement and free time.**

Any time a student receives a consequence through an office referral, a notification will be made to parents. Depending on the severity this may be a ParentSquare message, a phone call or a request for an in person meeting.

Some common consequences used depending on the incident include:

- Alternative recess
- Community service connected to the incident
 - Cleaning up a shared space
 - Volunteering with another classroom
- Reflection
- Loss of participation in a field trip or after school activity (non-academic)
- Research project and presentation on a topic
- [Succeed Boston](#) educational workshop referral

Bullying

Bullying is defined as repeated, intentional, and occurs when there is an imbalance of [power](#). It may:

- Cause physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property;
- Places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;
- Creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or
- Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means. This includes both the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator impersonates another person or the distribution or posting of information online if these acts create any of the conditions listed above.

State law prohibits bullying:

- at school and at all school facilities;
- at school-sponsored or school-related functions, whether on or off school grounds;
- on school buses and school bus stops;
- through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, licensed or used by a school; and
- at non-school-related locations and through non-school technology or electronic devices, if the bullying affects the school environment. 7.2.7 Retaliation related to Bullying: State law prohibits retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or who is a witness to or has reliable information about bullying.

There is a no-tolerance policy for bullying at the Hale. We encourage you to reach out to the classroom teacher or office staff regarding bullying concerns. There is also a BPS Safe Space and Bullying Prevention Hotline: 617-592-2378 (call or text), staffed 24/7 by trained counselors. Resources can also be found at <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/antibullying>.

Safety Procedures

Fire Drills

All BPS schools conduct Fire Drills on a quarterly basis. Our students are given warning ahead of time for the first drill of the year, and teachers spend time at the beginning of the school year teaching students the proper procedures. For subsequent drills, students are not aware when they are taking place. We do our best to avoid drills on days of inclement weather, or try to prepare teachers to ensure a drill does not cause harm or illness for any individuals. Notification of fire drills is not sent home.

Visitors & Volunteers

All visitors and volunteers at the Hale are required to enter through the main entrance and stop in the office to sign in. Any person that is not a staff member **MUST** have a visitor badge or name tag in order to be in the building.

If you are visiting the school, you will be asked to identify yourself before entering the building. We do this for everyone's safety.

Safe Mode / Containment

Per BPS policy, we complete Safe Mode drills twice a year. These will be announced drills so that all staff and students are aware it is a practice and not a real situation. Safe Mode is a protective action used to safeguard faculty, staff, and students when there is

Boston Police activity near the school or a potentially dangerous situation near or in the school (adapted from BPS "Classroom Emergency Procedures"). Safe Mode is used for when something is happening outside of the school, **it is NOT an active shooter drill**. Its primary function is to stop movement within the school so that we are able to account for all staff and students and ensure they are ready to receive any instructions needed if a situation should escalate. **Anytime we conduct a Safe Mode drill**, our school social worker and school psychologist are always available after any students experience heightened fear or anxiety and need a check-in.

Emergency Situations

In the event of an emergency situation, families will be notified at the earliest possible opportunity through Parent Square. We ask that in an emergency situation families avoid contacting their teachers directly so that teachers are able to actively support students in the moment. All communication will come from the office and/or BPS.

If there is a need to evacuate the school building (due to fire, flooding, power outage) the primary outdoor assembly areas are 1) the Hale playground, if that is unavailable then 2) the Boston Day & Evening Academy at Timilty Building. If that is also unavailable, then the 3) Higginson-Lewis K-8 School

Again, any emergency situations will be communicated to families directly from the main office via all communication channels available. It is VERY important that we have updated contact information for families in ASPEN including phone numbers, email, and emergency contacts. Anytime this information changes please contact our secretary at 617-635-8205 or vthomas@bostonpublicschools.org.