

Donovan Middle School
1701 Noyes Street
Utica, New York 13502

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Donovan Families and Students: This letter is to inform you that the first day of school will be **Thursday, September 7**. Please visit the school website at <https://www.uticaschools.org/schools/donovan/index> to learn more about our school. There are many useful resources including a Student Handbook. Copies of the Student Handbook will be distributed during the July Summer Camps, August Walk Thrus and September Student Assemblies.



Student Arrival and Dismissal

ARRIVAL

Bus students will arrive in the bus loop. Security will board the bus and release the students eating breakfast. These students will enter the building through the gymnasium entrance. Students not eating breakfast will remain on the bus and enter through the main doors at 7:42 am.

Car riders and walkers should arrive no sooner than 7:20 am and follow the signs and security directions for drop off. Students will report to the cafeteria if they are eating breakfast or the auditorium if they are not eating breakfast.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal is staggered. Bus students will be called first.

Once busses are loaded and off school property, walkers and car riders will be released.

Cars may pull into the bus loop to pick up their child after the busses leave school property. However, cars should not arrive before 2:30 pm. If you arrive earlier, you will need to park in the parking lot.

Instruction and Attendance:

Students are expected to attend and participate in school on a daily basis to receive rigorous standard-based instruction by their assigned teachers. More information regarding curriculum will be available during Open House on September 27 from 6-7 PM. If your child will be absent from school, please call 315-368-6547 to report your child's absences. In the event your child develops a pattern of absences leading to chronic absenteeism, one of the Attendance Teachers will contact you regarding supports available and/or develop an action plan for improvement. Attendance is essential to the learning process. Steps have been put in place to prevent students from being identified as chronically absent such as daily phone notifications when students are absent without an excuse, letters documenting days absent, phone calls from the Attendance Office and, if need be, involvement of the Attendance Teacher to offer supports. See attached attendance letter, review, sign and have your child bring it to the main office the first day of school. If you wish to sign your child out of school early, you must come to the front entrance and ring the bell. Security will assist you at that point. No students will be allowed to sign out after 2:00 PM as school ends at 2:22 PM.

Communication:

It is extremely important for all parents and guardians to remain in close contact with the school throughout the year. If your phone number or address changes, it is crucial that you communicate the changes with the school. Student Contact Information Sheets were mailed home last month for your review. Please call 315-368-6545 to make updates to contact information. Address changes cannot be made without proper documentation. We will reach out to you with on-going updates and information related to school expectations and procedures.

Breakfast and Lunch:

Upon arrival, bus students will be allowed off their bus only if they are eating breakfast. Otherwise, students remain on the bus until they are released. Car riders and walkers may enter through the gym entrance at 7:20 am but no later than 7:30 am to eat breakfast. Students will report to the cafeteria during their scheduled lunch period. Students have a 30-minute lunch in order to run 42-minute instructional periods to meet NYSED requirements.

Utica City School District Board of Education Cell Phone and Electronic Devices Policy:

E. Unauthorized use of Communication/Digital Devices and other Electronic Devices are prohibited.

Examples of electronic devices include, but are not limited to:

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| 1. Cell phones; | 7. Video devices/camcorders; |
| 2. Camera phones; | 8. Smart watches; |
| 3. Laser pointers, etc.; | 9. Headphones, earbuds, or other listening devices; |
| 4. iPods, iPads, Tablets; | 10. Vaporizers; |
| 5. Video games; | 11. E-Cigarettes; |
| 6. Digital cameras; | |

Unauthorized use of any of the above items is a violation of the Code and will subject the student to disciplinary action.

Communication/Digital Device - Usage is prohibited to maintain a safe and positive school learning environment, unless authorized by a teacher for instructional purposes (limited to that class period).

- Communication/Digital Device possession at school is discouraged; however if brought, must be kept with the power off.

Any Unauthorized Use of Communication/Digital Devices will result in the following actions:

- Communication/Digital Device will be confiscated without debate or further incident, i.e., insubordination, etc.
- Said item(s) must be forwarded to the appropriate administrator. Parents/guardians will be notified and may be required to pick up confiscated item(s).
- *Violations will be recorded in SchoolTool *Discipline History Report*.

Immunizations, Medication and Physicals:

Students must have the required immunizations to attend school. If your child does not have the required immunizations by September 26, they will be excluded from attending school until proof of proper immunizations is provided to the school nurse. Contact your physician or the Oneida County Health Department to insure your child is up to date on immunizations or make an appointment to obtain proper immunizations for your child. Donovan Middle School has an on-site Health Center that can assist you. If you have any questions regarding the Health Center, please call 315-368-6593 to inquire about their services. The Health Center is open over the summer. The school nurse returns September 5 and can be contacted at 315-368-6552.

Any students that require medication administered throughout the school day must call the school nurse to set up a time to deliver the medications to school and discuss your child's medical needs.

Students who want to try out for sports during the school year must have a current physical on record with the school nurse. The physical should not be more than one year old. The Health Center can also assist with physicals.

Utica City School District Board of Education Dress Code Policy:

IV. Student Dress Code

- A.** All students are expected to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Students and their parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for acceptable student dress, appearance, and cleanliness. Teachers and all other District personnel should exemplify and reinforce acceptable student dress and help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school setting.
- B.** Each building principal or the principal's designee shall be responsible for informing all students and their parents/guardians of the student dress code at the beginning of the school year and any revisions to the dress code made during the school year.
- C.** A student's dress, grooming and appearance shall conform to the following:
 - 1. Be safe, appropriate, and not disrupt or interfere with the educational process. Therefore, footwear is to be worn at all times. Any footwear that is a safety hazard (slippers, flip-flops, and the like) should not be worn. Also, under garments are to be covered completely by outer clothing.
- D.** Students should not wear:
 - 1. Extremely brief garments, such as tube tops, net-tops, halter tops, see-through garments, or garments which have spaghetti straps or plunging necklines (front or back);
 - 2. Skirts or dresses with high slits;
 - 3. Skirts, dresses, or shorts that are too short (hemlines should be no higher than mid-thigh);
 - 4. Or display, hats, caps, bandanas, or any other head covering (including hoods), except for a proven medical or religious purpose;
 - 5. Or display clothing or items that are gang related or that indicate gang involvement;
 - 6. Or display clothing or items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous, or that denigrate others based on a person's actual or perceived: race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender, or sex, or displays, promotes or references illegal substance(s) as defined in Section II.M;
 - 7. Or display clothing or items that display violence, including but not limited to guns, knives, stars.
- E.** Students who violate the student dress code shall be required to modify their appearance by covering or removing the offending item and, if necessary or practical, replacing it with an acceptable item. Any student who refuses to do so shall be subject to discipline, up to and including in-school suspension for the day. Any student who repeatedly fails to comply with the dress code shall be subject to further discipline, up to and including out of school suspension.

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- ⊗ Students will have access to hallway lockers. The school will provide a lock. No other locks may be used. See attached schedule to locate locker number and

combination. TIP: Take a picture of your child's schedule before they bring it to school.

- Lines are marked down the middle of the hallways and students are directed to stay to the right of the line for safety purposes.
- Numerous staff members will be posted throughout the school to assist students in finding their classrooms. We are well aware that this is the first time many students will enter Donovan Middle School and we are well prepared to assist your child in finding their way.
- A copy of your child's schedule is included in this mailing. Please be sure your child brings the schedule with them to school so we can quickly assist students in finding their Period 1 class. If your child forgets their schedule, they will report to the cafeteria to obtain a new schedule. TIP: Make a copy of your child's schedule and hang it on your refrigerator. You may see some blanks in your child's schedule. If you follow the times listed for each period, you will see there really is not a blank in your child's schedule. This may be due to the track scheduling system we utilize. Please call 315-368-6541 with any questions.
- Please visit our website at www.uticaschools.org/donovan for current information, monthly calendars and announcements.
- **ENCLOSED:** Supply List, Donovan September Calendar, **Amended** Utica City School District Calendar, Attendance Letter, Helpline Phone List, Open House Invitation, Food Sense Monthly Co-Op for all families, and Student Schedule.

Most importantly, we are all excited to welcome your child to Senator James H. Donovan Middle School. We are planning many fun activities throughout the school year including dances, movie nights, open gym, talent show, as well as many interesting clubs for students!

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation and support during the rollout of our 2023-2024 school year. Please contact my office at 315-368-6541 or appropriate staff listed on the Helpline Phone List with any questions and concerns.

Sincerely,
Miss Palladino
Ann Marie Palladino
(Principal)

