

Kindergarten Parent Handbook



Sachem Central School District

Sachem Central Schools

Lake Ronkonkoma, New York 11779

Dear Kindergarten Parents,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the Sachem School District. Your child is about to embark on an exciting journey beginning with our full day kindergarten program. Our goal is to make this important step an easy and successful one for you and your child.

Our school principals and teachers are ready to assist you as your child's formal education begins. They are committed to providing the very best in a quality education. The kindergarten program is one that promotes the development of the whole child through a nurturing environment where social, emotional, and intellectual growth are experienced through hands-on learning activities.

In Sachem, we promote a home and school connection to enhance success. We encourage you to avail yourself of the opportunity to participate in the many programs Sachem has to offer. By becoming involved and working collaboratively with the classroom teacher, your child will receive the maximum benefit from the school experience. Together, we can work toward your child's life-long love of learning and future accomplishments.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to read this handbook and making use of the parent tips, information and guidance it contains. We wish you a happy and successful year ahead.

Sincerely,

Kenneth E. Graham, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Kindergarten Mission Statement

The Sachem Central School District believes that the Kindergarten year is a critical one in the development of a child. This experience is unique and can hold the key to the love of life-long learning.

The kindergarten year has a definite place and an important purpose in the educational life of the child. It helps to lay the foundation for the child to become a thinking person. The kindergarten classroom provides materials, experiences, information, relationships and opportunities planned to meet the needs of the young child. Kindergarten helps the child move with ease from home to school.

Our program is designed to be developmentally appropriate and to allow for the differences and experiences each child brings to the classroom. The major goals of the program are to increase basic skills in the areas of literacy and math, build self-esteem, and develop a sense of responsibility and respect for others. Each day's schedule is centered around language-based activities and hands-on learning experiences as building blocks in this foundation for learning.

There are many objectives of the kindergarten program that the five year old child is striving for regardless of the content of the subject area. All these objectives are fundamentals which will be built upon in later years. These must be mastered before the child can expect to succeed in the upper levels of the educational program.

The district is committed to an integrated approach to kindergarten while meeting and/or exceeding expectations set forth by the New York State Education Department in accordance with the Common Core Standards. Curriculum integration will be presented where appropriate within a meaningful context. Assessments will be on-going in the form of classroom observations and interactions, literacy benchmarks and assessment, and quarterly math benchmarks. Special education and remedial support will be provided within the regular classroom setting where possible.

You Can Help Prepare Your Child for a Positive School Experience

By doing so, you'll help make the move a smooth one. Kindergarten means changes in daily routines. You can take steps to reduce any anxieties you or your child may feel. It's natural to have doubts and fears about change. Talking about what you and your child can expect - and his/her feelings will help you both feel more secure. Create a positive attitude toward school and try the following:



Develop Thinking

Visit the Library often. Help your child discover books, stories, poems, places and all things new. Daily reading to your child will help build a strong foundation for reading. Talk about the books you read. Discuss the pictures. Make predictions about the ending. Encourage story telling and retelling the stories in correct sequence. Help your child set limits and be selective about TV viewing, computer time, and video games.

Encourage Language

Encourage your child to speak clearly. When your youngster uses incorrect language, repeat the sentence correctly. Listen and show enthusiasm when your child speaks. Try not to anticipate what your child needs, wants or feels. Children need opportunities to question, to discuss, to develop conversational skills, and to express their thoughts and ideas clearly. Ask specific questions. Instead of asking "What did you do today?", ask "What did you do at learning center time today?"



Share

Spend time with your child by providing many experiences for your child. Your child learns on outings, in stores, at family gatherings, on trips, with pets, with toys, and with new people. Plan, create, and carry out projects and activities together. Play games that provide opportunities for sharing and turn taking. Encourage your child to make choices. Reward your youngster with praise and encouragement for things well done or "good tries."



Guide

Develop good listening skills by expecting your youngster to listen and follow one and two step directions the first time you say them. Try not to get into the habit of continually repeating directions and requests. Instill responsibility in your child. Allow for independent completion of tasks. Guide your child to share and interact appropriately with peers. Encourage understanding and tolerance of others.

Encourage Gross-Motor Activities

Provide opportunities for running, climbing, jumping, skipping, and hopping. Have your child catch, throw, kick, and bounce a ball. Encourage your child to use jump ropes, beanbags, and all kinds of balls.



Develop Fine-Motor Skills

Provide many opportunities for using crayons, magic markers, pencils, scissors, glue, and play dough. Encourage your child to draw, and write letters and numbers. Demonstrate and practice proper pencil grasp. (See attached handwriting information.) Providing your child with a variety of materials and opportunities to write reinforces the importance of the writing process.



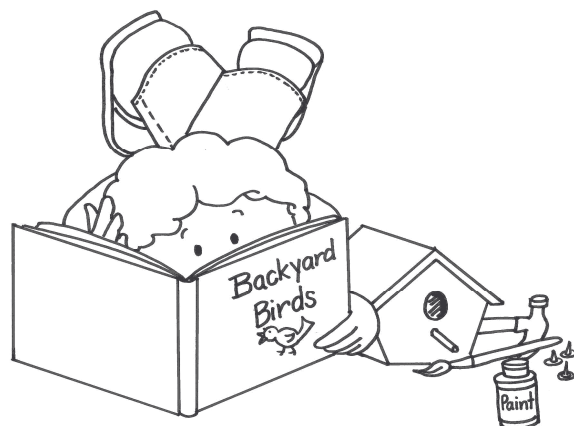
Communicate with Your Child's Teacher

Be supportive of your child's education. Supervise homework. Select a good time and place for you and your child to work together daily. Children do well with structure and predictable routines. Encourage and practice good organizational skills. Support your child's teacher and reinforce skills at home. Always contact your child's teacher if you have any questions or concerns.

Give Your Child a Head Start

You can prepare your child for school by giving your child a head start on each of the following:

- Reciting his/her full name, address, telephone number, and birthdate
- Recognizing his/her name in print
- Writing first name (only the first letter is capitalized - example: John, not JOHN)
- Taking off/putting on and fastening (zipping, buttoning, snapping) jacket or coat
- Being familiar with nursery rhymes (a great introduction to rhyme)
- Being familiar with pencils, magic markers, crayons, scissors, glue sticks, and glue
- Displaying independent use of the bathroom
- Demonstrating proper use of a tissue
- Knowing how to listen and follow simple directions
- Knowing how to put away toys and other materials properly
- Opening lunch containers and snack items (drink boxes, fruit snacks, yogurt)
- Recognizing most capital letters and some lower case letters
- Being familiar with some letter sounds and with numbers
- Being able to accept simple responsibility
- Being able to wait to have a turn
- Being able to sit and focus attention for a reasonable amount of time



A Typical Kindergarten Day May Include the Following Activities:

Pledge of Allegiance
Morning Song
Calendar Concepts
Morning Message
Phonemic Awareness
Alphabet Recognition/Phonics
Sight Word Vocabulary
*Read Alouds
*Shared Reading
*Guided Reading
*Independent Reading
Literature Connections
Comprehension Skills
*Shared Writing
*Interactive Writing
*Independent Writing
Handwriting
Learning Centers
Math
Social Studies
Science
Health/Safety
Technology
Lunch
Recess/Free Play
Snack
Physical Education
Music
Art
Library



Students will not be participating in all the above activities every day and will vary based on the daily schedule of each classroom.

* For a detailed explanation please go to www.sachem.edu , click on Curriculum Tools and then on Sachem Central School District Language Arts Program

Handwriting Skills

One of the many skills your child will learn in Kindergarten is how to properly form the letters of the alphabet. When your child begins writing, use the chart on the following page and encourage them to practice the correct formation of letters. The chart follows a top-to-bottom and left-to-right format just like reading. Be patient, positive, and provide encouragement as coordination improves.

Kid Writing



Kid writing introduces children to the world of written language through journal writing and Writer's Workshop. During this time they will receive fundamental writing skills they can apply for many purposes across the curriculum and at home. Children begin writing with illustrations and will progress with developmental spelling. The key is to help children decode unknown words by writing letters for the sounds they hear. Conventional spelling will follow as writing skills are developed. Below is a sample of typical Kindergarten writing:

My nam is Devin.
I am fiv yrs old.
I wnt a pet brd and sevin cats.



Writer's Workshop

Writer's Workshop provides children with the opportunity to be independent writers. The goal of writing is to communicate ideas, gain confidence, and enjoy writing. The workshop is structured, and instruction is tailored to the needs of the students. The workshop begins with the teacher providing a brief focused mini lesson. The purpose is to teach and model a skill or strategy that can be used when writing. The children then begin writing as the teacher circulates around the room, conferencing with students about their work. Finally, the class gathers to share work in progress or published writing.

Important Information to Remember

Absences/Tardiness

Daily attendance at school is encouraged and beneficial to the development of your child. If your child is absent from school, you are required to send a note explaining the reason for his/her absence (see attached). In this way we can record the exact reason for absence as required by law. Being absent without an excuse is illegal and must be recorded as so. If your child is going to be absent, parents are asked to call the school nurse. Any missed work and assignments can be picked up after 2 days of the absence or upon your child's return to school.

Students who are late to school are to be accompanied by an adult into the building and signed in. It is very important that parents report their child's tardiness or absence the morning either event occurs.

Emergency Notification

Should we need to contact you during the school day, we will be requesting emergency contact information, such as the name of several trusted neighbors or family members. In the event we are unable to contact you personally, we will continue to call the emergency contact numbers. Please keep the school office advised of any change in home or business telephone numbers, including unlisted numbers.

Leaving School

You have entrusted your child to our care and this responsibility is not carried lightly. A child will not be permitted to leave school during regular hours unless personally picked up by a parent/legal guardian, or an authorized adult as noted by the emergency contact card or parent note. **Photo identification will be required upon pick up (i.e. driver's license).** A neighbor or friend may pick up a child only with the authorization of the parent which is a written note to the teacher indicating the date and name of authorized adult to pick up his/her child. Please be sure to send your dated permission note beforehand. Otherwise, your child will be dismissed in the usual manner.

School Closings

On days when it is necessary to close schools due to bad weather, please refer to the following web sites, radio and/or TV stations:

WALK 97.5 FM
Channel 12 News

www.sachem.edu

When possible, a Connect-ED call will be made to the telephone number you provided to your child's school about delayed openings, early dismissals or school closings.

School Absence Note

Class _____ School _____

Today's Date _____

My child, _____

was absent from school on _____

because _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature

School Absence Note

Class _____ School _____

Today's Date _____

My child, _____

was absent from school on _____

because _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature

School Absence Note

Class _____ School _____

Today's Date _____

My child, _____

was absent from school on _____

because _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature

School Absence Note

Class _____ School _____

Today's Date _____

My child, _____

was absent from school on _____

because _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Food and Nutrition

To prepare your child for learning, please be sure that your child eats a balanced diet, gets some daily exercise, has 10 hours of sleep at night, and has a healthy meal to start every school day.

Breakfast

A nourishing breakfast is available to all Sachem students. A menu is available on <http://www.sachem.edu/nutrition/> indicating breakfast choices and costs, should you require this service. Children are encouraged to eat at home when possible to avoid any delay in the instructional time and the start of the school day.



Snack

An opportunity will be provided for kindergarten students to have a snack period. Please have your child bring in a small nutritious snack including a drink, each day. We recommend sending something which can be easily opened and eaten within about 10-15 minutes.



Lunch

A one half hour lunch period will be provided each day. Kindergarten students may purchase a nutritious school lunch or bring one from home. A lunch menu will be available on <http://www.sachem.edu/nutrition/> detailing daily choices and costs. We recommend you pre-pay for lunch through Sachem's Food Service Department. Our Kindergarten Aides provide individual assistance while the Kindergartners are proceeding through the lunch line and provide supervision while the children are eating.

If Your Child Will be Riding the Bus

Parents will be advised of the hours school will be in session. If your child is eligible for bus transportation, you will be notified of the closest bus stop to your home. During the first few days of school, plan to be at the bus stop at least thirty minutes prior to the time indicated on the bus schedule. The printed bus schedule is approximate; however, you can determine bus time more accurately after a few days of experience.

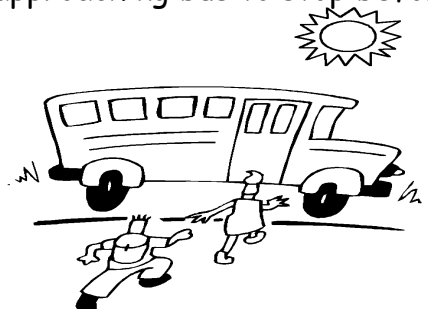
After determining bus arrival time, always have your child out for the bus five minutes before it is due to arrive. Your child will receive a special identification tag before school begins. **Have your child wear this tag for the first few weeks until he/she becomes familiar with the particular bus and driver.** Drivers will check the tags to assure that your child is on the right bus, and the tags will be helpful to teachers in getting to know your child and putting him/her on the right bus after school.

All kindergarten children must be met at the bus stop by an adult or they will be taken back to school. A form will be sent home to indicate who will meet your child when they get off the bus in the event you can not be there. During the school year, if your child is being picked up at the bus stop by someone not on this form, a note should be sent to school. The bus driver will then be given a copy of this note at dismissal.

On the first day of school please do not drive your child to school. Rather, take your child to the regular assigned bus stop and wait there. You will have the opportunity to meet other parents, and your child will share this experience with his/her classmates. The company of peers boarding the bus helps to make the first day more natural, and we have found this procedure to work most effectively.

Please review the following bus safety rules with your child before the first day of school. Children should:

- Remain seated while the bus is moving
- Talk quietly to their neighbors; no yelling or playing around
- Keep arms and heads inside the windows
- Wait for the approaching bus to stop before walking toward it



SACHEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
51 School Street
Lake Ronkonkoma, New York 11779

Dear Parents,

In order to ensure the safety of your child for the _____ school year, we will need to have a list of adults who can meet your child at the bus stop. The bus driver will not drop kindergarten students at the stop unless an authorized adult is available to meet the child. In the event an authorized adult is not available, the driver will return the child to the school.

Please sign and return the slip below to your child's classroom teacher on the first day of school. After the school receives and makes copies of the form, it will be given to the bus driver to keep on record. Any changes to the form must be submitted in writing to the attention of the school principal.

Thank you for your cooperation in ensuring the safety of your child.

Name of School _____

Child's Name _____

Bus Number _____

Classroom Teacher _____

Please allow my child to be released from the Sachem school bus to the following person(s):

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Parent or Guardians Signature

Principal's Signature

Before Registration

Eligibility

To be eligible for kindergarten, your child must be five years old on or before December 1st of the same year. This date has long been established in the district as the official cut-off for kindergarten eligibility and there are no exceptions granted. By regulation, chronological age may, in fact, be the sole criterion for entering kindergarten.

Parents must present a certified copy of a birth transcript from a government agency as proof of their child's age. A hospital certificate is not acceptable.

Residence



The child and parents or legal guardians must reside within the boundaries of the Sachem School District as of the first day of school and thereafter.



SACHEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Central Registration

51 School Street, Lake Ronkonkoma, NY 11779

Office Hours 8 am – 2pm **

631-471-7861 ext. 4

Kenneth E. Graham, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Susan Erdman
Attendance Officer

Registration for Sachem's 2017-2018 kindergarten program begins on February 1, 2017. All children residing in the Sachem Central School District who will be 5 years old on or before December 1, 2017 are eligible to register. For your convenience, you will find the registration application and all other registration information on our website (www.sachem.edu, Departments, Central Registration). To expedite the registration process, please take advantage of completing the paperwork prior to arriving. Applications will still be provided at the Central Registration office if needed.

Kindergarten orientation will be held at each elementary school between May 8th and May 12th. Please make every effort to register your child before May 1st to ensure your child's participation in the orientation. Kindergarten screenings will be held the week of June 5th. Children who have not registered by this time will not be able to attend the screening. Any student currently enrolled in our UPK lottery program or currently registered with the district for preschool special education purposes will be receiving information on how to register by mail.

For all students, until the modified packet is completed and returned, or you have registered your child in person, your child is not registered for kindergarten.

Listed below are the items required at the time of registration. We are unable to accept incomplete applications.

Original Birth Certificate with a raised seal

Parent or Guardian's photo identification

The parent or guardian of the child must be in attendance at the time of registration. If you are a step-parent, please bring your marriage certificate with you. It is not necessary for your child to be with you at the registration.

Proof of Residency from Parent/Guardian (all must provide first and second proof):

First Proof

- 1. Homeowners, Proof of Ownership**
 - a. Current mortgage statement or current yearly property tax bill or
 - b. Indenture documents if registering within 90 days of closing
- 2. Renters in an Apartment Complex**
 - a. Original lease must be signed by both the parent/guardian and complex management. The lease must be current. Registration cannot take place prior to the move in date.
- 3. Renting or Living in a Private Home that you do not own**
 - a. Residents living in a privately owned home that he/she does not own must submit a Statement of Residence. The statement must be signed by both the homeowner and the parent/guardian. The homeowner must also provide the current month's mortgage statement or current year's tax bill. Registration cannot take place prior to the move in date. The Statement of Residence form is available on the Sachem website as well as at the Central Registration Office.

Second Proof

1. One utility (electric, gas, cable, house telephone, water) or car insurance bill dated within 30 days of registration.
2. If the above is not possible, three separate documents addressed to the residence are required. They must be dated within 30 days of registration. Examples of such are payroll stub, health insurance statement, cell phone bill, governmental agency letter, bank statement, medical bill, etc.

Immunization & Health Examinations as mandated by the New York State Department of Health.

Proof of required **immunizations** for school entry is mandated by the New York State Department of Health and must be presented at the time of registration. Current requirements can found at <http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2370.pdf>. The child's immunization booklet is not acceptable. Proof must be on physician's letterhead and signed by either actual signature, electronic signature, or signature stamp.

All new entrants must have a **Health Examination**. The physical examination form will be accepted if it is dated no more than twelve months prior to the student's first day of attendance. If this documentation cannot be presented at the time of registration, it must be provided to the school within 30 days of the student's first day of attendance. The student may receive a physical examination from the school physician if the documentation is not received. A Dental Health Certificate is suggested but not required for registration.

**Please call to inquire about the office hours when school is not in session.

Sachem Central Schools

Lake Ronkonkoma, New York 11779

Dear Parents,

We are excited about the year ahead. Our goal is to work together to make your child's first experience in the Sachem School District a positive one. During the first few weeks of school, we will be spending a great deal of time getting to know your son/daughter, establishing routines, and developing a community of learners. Please be assured that this is time well spent and will enable us to do many exciting and challenging things in the year ahead.

We look forward to meeting with you the first few weeks of school and providing your child with the best educational experience possible. Please take time to review the suggested activities and utilize the Summer Calendar of Activities. Your positive attitude will be the key to your child's success in school!

Sincerely,

The Kindergarten Teachers



Unity

I dreamt I stood in a studio
And watched two sculptors there.
The clay they used was a young child's mind
And they fashioned it with care.

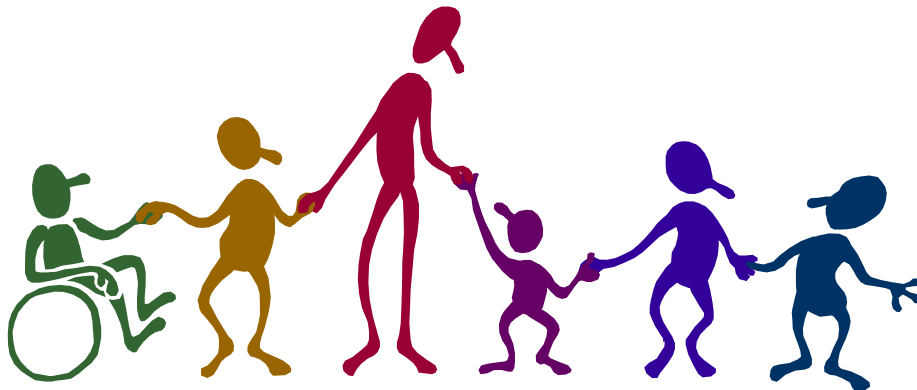
One was a teacher - the tools he used
Were books, music and art.
The other, a parent, worked with a guiding hand,
And a gentle loving heart.

Day after day, the teacher toiled with touch
That was deft and sure.
While the parent labored by his side
And polished and smoothed it over.

And when at last, their task was done
They were proud of what they had wrought.
For the things they had molded into the child
Could neither be sold nor bought.

And each agreed they would have failed
If each had worked alone.
For behind the teacher stood the school
And behind the parent, the home.

Author Unknown



Abridged version of...

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

By:
Stephen Covey



The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Habit 1: Be Proactive

Kid Friendly Language: You're in Charge

Ineffective Paradigm: I am a product of my circumstances

Effective Paradigm: I am a product of my choices.



Be proactive means to take responsibility for your choices and behaviors. Habit 1 is key to all of the other habits; that is why it comes first. Be proactive says, "I am in charge of my own life. I am responsible for whether I am happy or sad. I can choose how I react to other people or situations. I am in the driver's seat." Children can easily understand that different choices yield different results. The goal is to teach them to think about those results before they decide what to do.



Habit 2: Begin With the End in Mind

Kid Friendly Language: Have a Plan

Ineffective Paradigm: I live by default.

Effective Paradigm: I live by design.

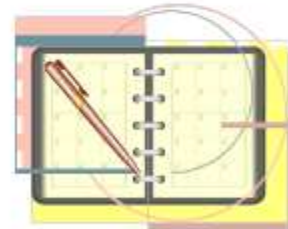
Begin With the End in Mind means to think about how you would like something to turn out before you get started.

Habit 3: Put First Things First

Kid Friendly Language: Work First, Then Play

Ineffective Paradigm: I put urgent things first.

Effective Paradigm: I put important things first.



Put First Things First means to decide what is most important and take care of that first. Thinking about what needs to be done tomorrow or by the end of the week can be overwhelming, especially for children. Learning to think of which things are the most important and taking care of them first allows children (and adults) to be less stressed.

Habit 4: Think Win-Win

Kid Friendly Language: Everyone Can Win



Ineffective Paradigm: There is only so much, and the more you get, the less there is for me.

Effective Paradigm: There is plenty out there for everyone, and more to spare.

Think Win-Win is the belief that everyone can win. It's not me or you— it is both of us. It is a belief that there are enough good things for everyone; it is an abundant way of thinking. Think Win-Win is being happy for others when good things happen to them.

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood

Kid Friendly Language: Listen Before you Talk

Ineffective Paradigm: I listen with the intent to reply.

Effective Paradigm: I listen with the intent to understand.



Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood means that it is better to listen first and talk second. By taking the time to listen to another person you reach a higher level of communication. Since young children have difficulty understanding another's paradigm (point of view) teaching habit 5 is best approached introducing listening as a skill that should be practiced. Learning to listen without interrupting and learning to listen with your ears, your eyes, and your heart will help children build a foundation for Habit 5. Simply put, we have two ears and one mouth so we should be spending more time listening with the intent to understand.

Habit 6: Synergize

Kid Friendly Language: Together is Better

Ineffective Paradigm: It's either my way, your way, or a compromise.

Effective Paradigm: Together we can create a better way, a higher way.



Synergize is when two or more people work together to create a better solution than either would have thought of alone. It's not your way or my way, but a better way. Synergy is taking good ideas and making them better by working together.

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw

Kid Friendly Language: Balance Feels Best

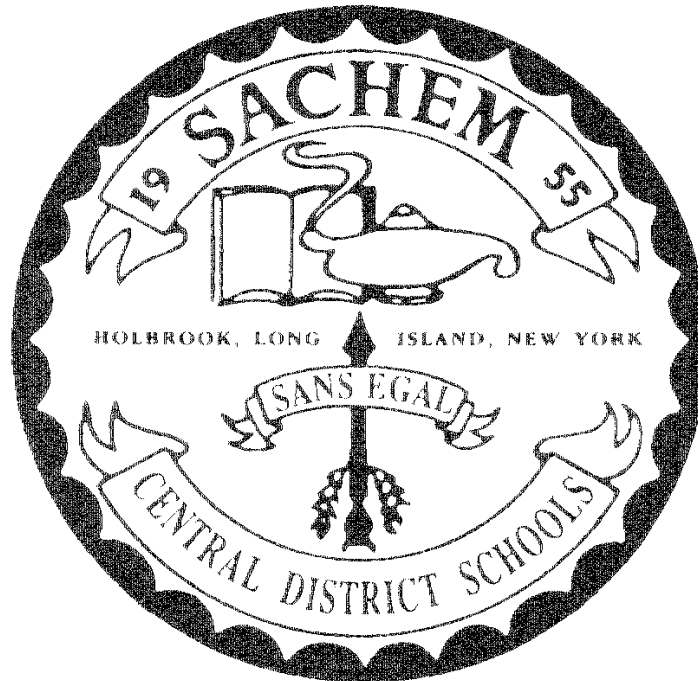
Ineffective Paradigm: I focus only on getting the golden eggs.

Effective Paradigm: I nurture the goose that lays the golden eggs.



Sharpen the Saw means to have balance in your life. Habit 7 reminds us that we are more productive when we are in balance— body, brain, heart, and soul. Just like the four tires on a car, if one area is being ignored or overused, the rest will feel the results.

Be the change you wish to see in
The world. — Mahatma Gandhi



The Sachem Elementary Curriculum Department, in consultation with teaching staff, completed this curriculum project. Special thanks to Lisa Ranieri, Kristin Fullam, Donna Bleck, Adrienne Spivak and Cathy Juliano for their collaborative efforts in creating this informational document.

