Mohawk Parent News

August, 2026

The Mohawk Way

Mission: At Mohawk School we are committed to providing a safe learning environment where academic excellence is essential for all students. Mohawk scholars are engaged in learning both academically and socially.
Vision: Mohawk staff is committed to best practices in active learning that is essential to the success of all learners.
Values: We are committed to: Collaboration, Respect, Positive energy/actions, explicit and data driven instruction.

Welcome Back!

Welcome back to school! We are excited to begin the 2026–2027 school year and we look forward to a year filled with learning, growth, achievement, and meaningful connections. As students prepare their backpacks and families prepare for a new school year, our staff is eagerly preparing classrooms and learning experiences designed to help every child thrive.

This year, our focus will be on fostering **academic excellence**, strengthening **social-emotional growth**, and creating **new opportunities for learning and exploration**. Through high-quality instruction, differentiated learning experiences, and engaging opportunities for critical thinking and collaboration, we will help students develop the skills and confidence needed for success both inside and outside the classroom. Equally important, we will continue to nurture kindness, resilience, responsibility, and positive relationships so that every student feels valued, connected, and empowered.
Our partnership with families is essential to student success. By working together, we can ensure that every child experiences a year of growth, discovery, and accomplishment. We encourage open communication, active involvement, and a shared commitment to helping our students achieve their goals.

The first day of school is right around the corner—Monday, August 17, 2026. Please refer to our full school calendar at www.sd163.com for important dates and updates. As we begin the year, we ask for your patience with transportation as routes are fine-tuned and for your cooperation in keeping us informed of any changes. Let's work together to make this school year a great success—see you soon!

Our Normal School Day:
8:15 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Late start days
(**8/17/26- 8/28/26**)
9:25 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Normal Breakfast Begins:
7:50a.m.

(**8/17/26- 8/28/26**)
Late start breakfast:
9:05 a.m.

Early Dismissals
8:15a.m.-12:30p.m.

School Supply Lists

PDF **kdg School Supply List 26-27.pdf** Download 49.8 KB

1st_Grade supply list.pdf

Download
141.9 KB

2nd grade school supply list 26-27.pdf

Download
76.7 KB

Kami Export - 3rd_Grade (1) supply list.pdf

Download
214.9 KB

Kindergarten
UNPACK THE BACKPACK
Please join us
August 13th
2026
3:30-4:30p.m.
Mohawk
Primary Center
Our kdg teachers will open their classroom doors to allow families to unpack their backpacks prior to the first day of school.

Mohawk Primary Center
Early Dismissal
12:30 p.m.
September 8, 2026
(MAIN OFFICE 708.668.9302)
301 Mohawk St. Park Forest, IL 60466
FOR MORE INFO VISIT WWW.sd163.COM

8/13 3:30-4:30 Unpack the Backpack
8/17 First day of school (Late start day)
9/7 No School-Labor Day
9/8 12:30 Early Dismissal
9/17 Title I Mtg (5:30 pm-6:00 pm) & OpenHouse (6:00 pm-7:00 pm)

Our Team is growing!

Each year brings positive change, and this includes a few exciting additions and changes to our school staff. We are thrilled to welcome new team members who bring with them not only a wealth of expertise but also a genuine passion for working with young children. Some of these individuals are new to our school district, while others are familiar faces who have served in various roles over the years. Regardless of their path here, each of our new team members shares a deep commitment to the academic success and well-being of our students. We encourage you to take a few moments to get to know our new (and returning) staff members as they become an integral part of the Mohawk family!

New & Returning Staff members
Room 1 Ms. Falk (kdg)
Room 2 Mrs. Easton (kdg)
Room 3 Ms. L. Morgan (kdg)
Room 4 Mrs. Albright (2nd grade)
Room 5 Ms. C. Mescall/Ms. Mclaughlin (multi-grade)
Room 6 Mrs. Balentine (3rd grade)
Room 7 Ms. Pacewic (1st grade)
Room 8 Ms. Whitaker (3rd grade)
Room 9 Mrs. Wooten (3rd grade)
Room 10 Mrs. Williams (1st grade)
Room 11 Mrs. Nave (1st grade)
Room 12 Ms. D. Pruitt (2nd grade)
Room 13 Reading Team/Mrs. Will & the reading team
Room 14 Ms. Wison (2nd grade)
Room 15 Ms. Ms. Destua/Mrs. Woods/Ms. Lee (multi-grade)

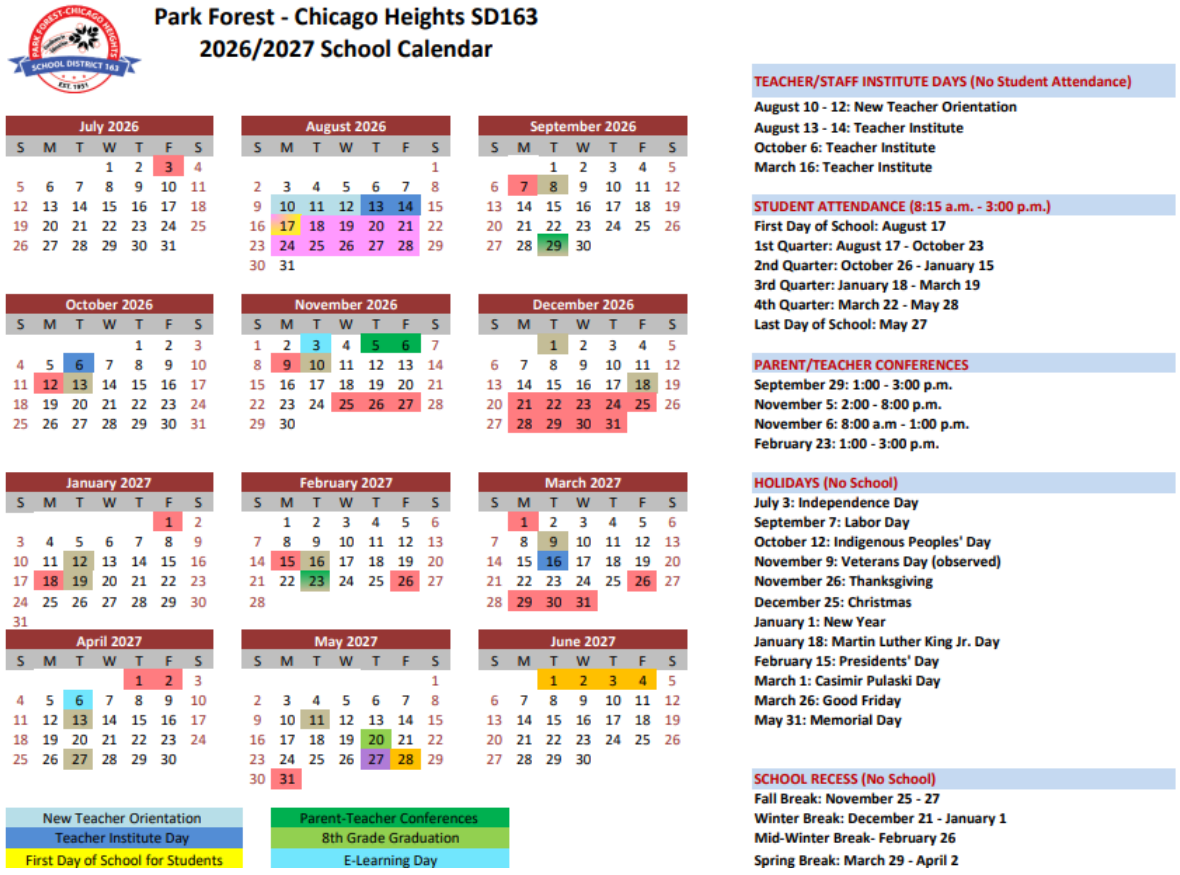
Administrative Assistant: Mrs. Peggy
Building Assistants: Mrs. Davis & Ms. Daisy
Media Tech: Ms. Lauryn Saunders
School R.N. Mrs. Ross

Specialists
Mrs. Will
Mrs. Alcumbrac
Mrs. Harmon
Ms. Passmore
Coach D
Ms. Kaylin Thomas (music teacher)
Ms. Young-Bey

Ms. Collier
Mrs. Fridge (Social Worker)
Mrs. Woods
Ms. Riebel
Ms. Scott (ELL teacher)
Ms. Jenkins
Mrs. Goldfarb
Ms. Summerville

Custodial & Lunchroom Specialisits
Ms. Georgia
Ms. Sheila
Ms. Rubi

School Calendar



Thrillshare

This year, our School District will use Thrillshare and Class Dojo to communicate with parents. Thrillshare offers our school families access to the district and school newsletters and updates. I will also post important school information via Thrillshare at www.sd163.com to keep you informed. An invitation will be necessary to join Class Dojo by your child's teacher. Class Dojo provides an immediate connection to communicate with your child's teacher.

Attendance Matters

Every student. Every day.

School Safety

Parents are valued and welcomed at Mohawk. However, as students begin to settle into their new or returning school routines, we kindly ask that parents stop at the door and do not walk students to their classrooms. This practice helps promote student independence and supports a smooth and secure start to the school day. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.Please be advised that all entry doors are locked daily. Therefore, all visitors who wish to enter the school must be buzzed into the building. Visitors should park on Mohawk Street in the circle drive and enter the main office. School visitors include parents, guardians, vendors, and any other family/friends who wish to enter the school. This procedure is for the safety and welfare of all of our staff and students.

Speaking of Safety

- Flip flop shoes are not allowed on the playground or at our school.
- Earrings (for boys and girls) are only allowed in both ears.
- Halter tops/back out tops/spaghetti straps/crop tops are not allowed.
- Lipstick and Make-up can only be worn by adults.
- Weapons (or toy weapons) of any sort are not allowed.
- Hoodies are not allowed in our school.
- Only clear backpacks are allowed at school.

Student birthdays

In an effort to maximize learning time, we **do not permit classroom birthday parties**. If you would like to honor your child for his/her birthday you may send store bought cupcakes to the office (cupcakes are voluntarily). Please do not send pizza, cake, ice cream, balloons, nor treat bags. Each student will have their birthday acknowledged by receiving a birthday surprise from Dr. Chinn; and their name will be read on the announcements. Based upon classroom procedures, a small classroom celebration (singing, cupcakes; if donated by the family) may take place in the classroom.

Blue Point Drill

All schools in Park Forest – Chicago Heights School District 163 are equipped with the Blue Point Alert System. Blue Point is a life-safety response system with components that look and function much like a fire alarm system but it is designed for police and medical emergencies. Activating the system will instantly alert police or paramedics in the event of a life-threatening emergency. We have a long-term commitment to providing a safe learning environment for all who enter our doors and have installed the Blue Point Alert System to complement and enhance the safety and security measures we have in place.
The Blue Point System:

- Automates and accelerates emergency response
- Provides internal communications for our leadership team
- Improves situational awareness with real-time information for police or paramedics

As required by Illinois School Code and District 163 Board Policy, we will conduct a district-wide drill. The drill will involve the police department to ensure that we are as prepared as possible. In an effort to communicate appropriately to students, the District will regard this training as “blue lockdown in the event there is a dangerous intruder.” Please be on the lookout for a letter that will come home with your child(ren) informing of more information and the date of the drill.

If you could wave a magic wand that would improve the chances of school success for your children as well as their classmates, would you take up that challenge? For decades, researchers have pointed to one key success factor that transcends nearly all others, such as socioeconomic status, student background or the kind of school a student attends: parental involvement. Students whose parents stay involved in school have better attendance and behavior, get better grades, demonstrate better social skills and adapt better to school. At Mohawk Primary Center we welcome parents and families to join our school's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)!!!

10 Ways to Help Your Child Succeed in Elementary School

https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/school-help-elementary.html

1. Go to Back-to-School Night and Parent-Teacher Conferences

Kids do better in school when parents are involved in their academic lives. Attending back-to-school night at the start of the school year is a great way to get to know your child's teachers and their expectations. School administrators may discuss school-wide programs and policies too.

Going to parent-teacher conferences is another way to stay informed. These are usually held once or twice a year to discuss a student's progress. They're a chance to discuss strategies to help kids do their best in class. Meeting with the teacher also lets kids know that what goes on in school will be shared at home.

For kids with special learning needs, other meetings with teachers and school staff can help parents set up or revise individualized education plans (IEPs), 504 education plans, or gifted education plans.

Keep in mind that parents or guardians can request meetings with teachers, principals, school counselors, or other school staff any time during the school year.

2. Visit the School and Its Website

Knowing the physical layout of the school building and grounds can help you connect with your child when you talk about the school day. It's good to know the location of the main office, school nurse, cafeteria, gym, athletic fields, playgrounds, auditorium, and special classes.

On the school website, you can find information about:

- the school calendar
- staff contact information
- upcoming events like class trips
- testing dates

Many teachers maintain their own websites that detail homework assignments, test dates, and classroom events and trips. Other resources for parents and students are usually available on the district, school, or teacher websites.

3. Support Homework Expectations

Homework in grade school reinforces and extends classroom learning and helps kids practice important study skills. It also helps them develop a sense of responsibility and a work ethic that will benefit them beyond the classroom.

Besides making sure your child knows that you see homework as important, you can help by creating a good study environment. Any well-lit, comfortable, and quiet workspace with the needed supplies will do. Avoiding distractions (like a TV in the background) and setting up a start time and end time can also help.

Typically, expect about 10 minutes each night of homework or studying per elementary grade level. Fourth-graders, for example, should have about 40 minutes of homework or studying each school night. If you find that it's often taking a lot longer than this guideline, talk with your child's teacher.

Be available to help with assignment instructions, offer guidance, answer questions, and review the completed work. But try not to provide the correct answers or do the assignments yourself. Learning from mistakes is part of the process and you don't want to take this away from your child.

4. Send Your Child to School Ready to Learn

A nutritious breakfast fuels up kids and gets them ready for the day. In general, kids who eat breakfast have more energy and do better in school. They're also less likely to miss school, and make fewer trips to the school nurse with stomach complaints related to hunger.

Help boost your child's attention span, concentration, and memory with breakfast foods that are rich in whole grains, fiber, and protein, and low in added sugar. If your child is running late, send along fresh fruit, nuts, yogurt, or half a peanut butter and banana sandwich. Many schools provide nutritious breakfast options before the first bell.

Kids also need enough sleep to be alert and ready to learn all day. Most school-age kids need 9–12 hours of sleep a night. Bedtime problems can come up at this age for a variety of reasons. Homework, sports, after-school activities, games and TV, and hectic family schedules can lead to kids not getting enough sleep.

Lack of sleep can cause irritable or hyperactive behavior and might make it hard for kids to pay attention in class. It's important to have a consistent bedtime routine, especially on school nights. Leave enough time before lights-out for your child to unwind, and limit media use like TV, video games, and Internet access.

5. Teach Organizational Skills

When kids are organized, they can stay focused instead of spending time looking for things and getting sidetracked. Kids should have an assignment book and homework folder (many schools supply these) to keep track of homework and projects.

Check your child's assignment book and homework folder every school night so you're familiar with assignments and your child doesn't fall behind. Set up a bin for papers that you need to check or sign. Also, keep a special box or bin for completed and graded projects and toss papers that you don't need to keep.

Talk to your child about keeping their school desk in order so papers that need to come home don't get lost. Teach them how to use a calendar or personal planner to help stay organized.

You also can teach your child how to make a to-do list to help prioritize and get things done. It can be as simple as:

1. *homework*
2. *soccer*
3. *put clothes away*

No one is born with great organizational skills — they need to be learned and practiced.

6. Teach Study Skills

Introducing kids to study skills now will pay off with good learning habits throughout life.

In elementary school, kids often take end-of-unit tests in math, spelling, science, and social studies. Be sure to know when a test is scheduled so you can help your child study ahead of time rather than just the night before. You also might need to remind your child to bring home the right study materials, such as notes, study guides, or books.

Teach your child how to break down bigger tasks into smaller, manageable chunks so preparing for a test isn't overwhelming. You also can introduce your child to tricks to help them recall information. For example, taking a break after a 45-minute study period is a key way to help kids process and remember information.

Your child probably will begin standardized testing in elementary school. While students can't really study for standardized tests, some teachers provide practice tests to help ease students' worries. In general, if studying and testing becomes a source of stress for your child, talk about it with the teacher or school counselor.

7. Know the Disciplinary Policies

Schools usually list their disciplinary policies (sometimes called **the student code of conduct**) in student handbooks. The rules cover expectations — and consequences for not meeting them — for things like student behavior, dress codes, use of electronic devices, and acceptable language.

The policies may include details about attendance, vandalism, cheating, fighting, and weapons. Many schools also have policies about bullying, such as the school's definition of bullying, consequences for bullies, support for victims, and how to report bullying.

Your child should be aware of what's expected at school and know that you'll support the consequences if expectations aren't met. It's easiest for students when school expectations match the ones at home. That way, kids see both settings as safe, caring places that work together as a team.

8. Get Involved

No matter what grade your kids are in, consider volunteering at school. It's a great way to show them you're interested in their education.

Many grade-schoolers like to see their parents at school or at school events. But follow your child's cues to find out what works for you both. If your child seems uncomfortable with you being at the school or involved in an extracurricular activity, consider a more behind-the-scenes role. Make it clear that you aren't there to spy — you're just trying to help the school community.

Parents can get involved by:

- being a classroom helper or homeroom parent
- organizing and/or working at fundraising activities and other special events, like bake sales, car washes, and book fairs
- chaperoning field trips
- planning class parties
- attending school board meetings
- joining the school's PTO
- working as a library assistant
- reading a story to the class
- giving a talk for career day
- attending school events

Check the school or teacher website to find volunteer opportunities that fit your schedule. Even giving a few hours during the school year can make a strong impression on your child.

9. Take Attendance Seriously

It's important for kids to get to school on time every day, because having to catch up can be stressful and interfere with learning. But sick kids should stay home from school if they have a fever, are nauseated, vomiting, or have diarrhea. Kids who lose their appetite, are clingy or tired, complain of pain, or who just don't seem to be acting "themselves" also might benefit from a sick

day. If your child misses a lot of school due to illness, check with the teacher about any work that needs to be done.

Sometimes students want to stay home from school because of problems with classmates, assignments or grades, or even teachers. This can lead to real symptoms, like headaches or stomachaches. If you think there's a problem at school, talk with your child — and then perhaps with the teacher — to find out more about what's causing the stress. The school counselor or school psychologist also might be able to help.

10. Talk About School

Usually, it's easy to talk with elementary students about what's going on in class and the latest news at school. You probably know what books your child is reading and are familiar with the math being worked on. But make time to talk with your child every day, so they know that what goes on at school is important to you. When kids know parents are interested in their academic lives, they'll take school seriously too.

The way you talk and listen to your child can influence how well they listen and respond. Listen carefully, make eye contact, and avoid multitasking while you talk. Be sure to ask questions that go beyond "yes" or "no" answers.

These early years of schooling are an important time for parents to be informed and supportive. It sets the stage for children to develop and grow as young learners.

Dr. Chinn, Principal
Mohawk Primary Center