



# Bethesda

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Home of the Dragons

## Student Handbook 2018-19

Jill Justus, Principal  
jillj@wcs.edu

Michelle Hummel, Assistant Principal  
michelle.hummel@wcs.edu

Clara Martinez, Bookkeeper  
clara.martinez@wcs.edu

Kim Walton, Secretary  
kim.walton@wcs.edu

Williamson County Schools  
Dr. Mike Looney, Superintendent  
1320 West Main Street  
Franklin, TN 37064  
(615) 472-4000  
www.wcs.edu

# ASSESSMENTS

Williamson County students participate in both formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments are ongoing classroom assessments utilized to inform instruction. Examples include: exit tickets, quizzes, unit tests, STAR universal screeners and benchmark assessments. Summative assessments typically take place at the end of a course. They are utilized to guide the school on overall approaches and strategies for instruction.

Students in grades K-5 will participate in the district-wide reading and math STAR screener. Students in grades 3-5 will participate in state and district assessments. During assessment windows we ask that parents make every attempt to have students at school on time. No absences will be excused for family trips.

# ATTENDANCE

Consistent attendance and punctuality is a cornerstone of student progress and success. If students repeatedly miss school or are often tardy, it puts them at risk for misunderstanding concepts that are taught and reinforced while they are not present. Additionally, student attendance is one of the categories the federal and state governments use to evaluate schools and assess whether or not they are making adequate yearly progress. Consistent attendance is a priority at Bethesda.

## Tardies and Early Dismissals (before 3:30)

Students are tardy if they are not in their classrooms by 8:50 am. Students may be dropped off at school starting at 8:30 a.m. If you need childcare prior to this time, please contact our SACC program.

Late arrival and early dismissal may be excused for the following reasons: (1) illness, (2) death in the family, (3) recognized religious holiday, (4) doctor or dentist appointment, or (5) Principal approved emergency or exceptional circumstances. Early dismissals are not allowed after 3:30 (except in an emergency) due to safety issues and the interruption of instructional time in classes. Instructional time extends until dismissal at 3:50 PM.

Parents must send a note to the teacher the morning of the request for early dismissal (unless an emergency situation) with the following information:

- 1) Student's name and teacher's name
- 2) Date and time child needs to be dismissed
- 3) Reason for early dismissal

The parent must sign the student out in the office at dismissal time stating time and reason, and office personnel will call the student to the office when the parent arrives to pick up the student.

### Excused Absences

Excused absences include: (1) illness, (2) death in the family, (3) recognized religious holiday, (4) doctor or dentist appointment, or (5) Principal approved emergency or exceptional circumstances.

### Written Documentation

The Williamson County School Board Policy 6.200 requires written parental or medical documentation for all absences, tardies, and early dismissals. This documentation ensures that school personnel are fully and accurately informed about your child. All absences are considered “unexcused” until a note is sent, preferably within 48 hours of the student’s return to school. When a student’s absences exceed 9 days, a doctor’s note will be required to excuse all future absences. Notes are kept on file for the school year. Parents may also send an email with all appropriate information to their teacher AND our attendance secretary, Kim Walton at [kim.walton@wcs.edu](mailto:kim.walton@wcs.edu) .

Notes should state:

- child’s name
- teacher’s name
- date(s) of absence
- reason for absence
- doctor’s note attached (if applicable)
- parent or guardian signature

### School Notification

When a student accumulates a total of 9 excused absences, all other absences will be considered unexcused unless a doctor’s note is presented upon the day of returning to school.

In accordance with new state guidelines for schools related to truancy, Williamson County Schools has implemented a three tiered system to monitor attendance. Parents will be notified as unexcused absences accumulate (recorded) to proactively help with truancy concerns.

- 3 unexcused absences - parents will be notified via email or phone.
- 5 unexcused absences – a meeting will be held with family and school personnel. The team will create a plan to support the family and ensure subsequent school attendance. Follow-up meetings will be planned to monitor progress.
- If the student continues to accumulate absences, additional interventions will be established.
- The new Tennessee Department of Education Accountability Regulations (ESSA) defines students as "chronically absent" after 18 absences per year, regardless of excused or unexcused. Students who accumulate 18 or more absences will be considered “Chronically Absent” and reported to the state.

# BEHAVIOR

All students are expected to adhere to the following school expectations: **Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Cooperate, and Put Forth your Best Effort.** Individual classroom teachers will establish classroom procedures for meeting these expectations. If a student fails to meet expectations, it may result in a conference with school administration. Administrative consequences will be determined based on behavior and any prior behaviors or interventions. Consequences may include but are not limited to: time in the office, silent lunch, ISS (in school suspension) and possible OSS (out of school suspension). In addition, all Bethesda students are expected to follow WCS policies, procedures and guidelines concerning discipline for any offenses concerning Zero Tolerance and Zero Tolerance reasoned judgement offenses.

## “BULLY-FREE” SCHOOL

**Bullying is not tolerated.** We ask all parents and students to report any bullying to a teacher or staff member in the building. The report will be investigated by administration within 48 hours. The investigation and required intervention will be implemented within 20 calendar days. Administration will notify the parent/guardian of any students involved immediately. Administration will also provide information regarding any support services available. Administration will follow investigation procedures and definitions set forth in policy [6.3032](#). Behavior that is found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to discipline, up to and including suspension as deemed by administration.

Definition: Bullying is defined by Tennessee law as any act that substantially interferes with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities or performance. Bullying is: 1) repeated, 2) intentional harm, 3) against someone perceived with less power. Bullying has the effect of:

1. Physically harming a student or damaging a student’s property
2. Knowingly placing the student or students in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage to the student’s property.
3. Causing emotional distress to a student or students; or
4. Creating a hostile educational environment.

If a student needs help with resolving a conflict or if a student feels that he/she is being bullied, he/she should communicate with a staff member such as a teacher, counselor or administration.

Families may also report bullying to a WCS toll free tip line. The toll free number is 1-855-284-0669. Incidents can also be reported via email at [bullying@wcs.edu](mailto:bullying@wcs.edu). Please reference School Board Policy 6.3032 <https://www.wcs.edu/pdf/boe/policies/63032.pdf>

## BYOT (Bring Your Own Technology) for Students in Grades 3-5

Bethesda Elementary teachers work to incorporate technology into student learning on a regular basis. Every student in the school has access to a Chromebook for use during the school day. Students in grades 3-5 are also able to bring their own devices for **instructional purposes**. Examples of devices include Nooks, Kindles, iPads, and laptops. All other electronic games, toys, trading cards, hand-held games, etc. are not permitted. Apple Watches or similar “smartwatch” devices are not an approved district device and are also prohibited. If any of these items are seen or heard during the day they will be taken up and returned only to the parent/guardian. Teachers may allow students to use their cell phone for instructional practices and they should only be used for that purpose during the school day. Cell phones and cameras may not be used to take pictures or video in the school setting unless requested by the teacher for instructional purposes. If, as a parent, you feel that it is imperative for your child to have a cell phone/smartwatch at school for after school communication, it is to remain in your child’s backpack, turned off during the school day. All items in backpacks are the responsibility of the student and the school is not liable for **ANY** loss or damage incurred. **We are working to keep students focused on learning.**

The student’s classroom teacher will communicate to parents any exceptions to this policy for that specific classroom. The teacher will state when it is appropriate to bring electronic devices from home. District information about BYOT and the Acceptable Use Agreement for Digital Devices Form for grades 3-5 must be electronically checked and agreed upon during the re-enrollment process or the paper form must be completed and agreed upon during new student registration in order for your child to participate in BYOT. Students must adhere to the Acceptable Use Agreement found in school board policy [4.406](#). In addition, students take full responsibility for personal digital devices at all times. The school is not responsible for the security of the device.

- The device must be in silent mode while on school campuses unless otherwise directed by the teacher.
- The device may not be used to cheat on assignments or tests or for non-instructional purposes during instructional time.
- The device may not be used to record, transmit or post photographic images or video of a person, or persons on campus during school activities and/or hours unless assigned by the teacher as allowed by the WCS Acceptable Use, Media Release and Internet Safety Procedures.
- The device may only be used to access files or internet sites which are relevant to the classroom curriculum. Non-instructional games are not permitted.
- Students must comply with a teacher’s request to turn off the device.

Students acknowledge and agree that:

- The school’s network filters will be applied to the WCS guest network access to the internet and shall not be circumvented.
- The school district may collect and examine any device at any time for the purpose of enforcing the terms of this agreement, investigating student discipline issues, or for any other school related purpose.

- Personal technology must be charged prior to bringing it to school, and the device must run off its own battery while at school.
- Students remain subject to all other school behavior rules.

Students are responsible for the well-being of their device. Please consider the following to help ensure the safety and success of your child's device:

1. Record the serial number on the device in the event of it being lost or stolen
2. Seek to use a password protected device
3. Do not share any passwords
4. Consider an insurance policy for your device
5. Monitor your child's use of the device on a regular basis

Bethesda Elementary will follow the guidelines set by the district that can be located at [www.wcs.edu](http://www.wcs.edu). Any disciplinary actions regarding inappropriate behavior with a device will be handled on a case by case basis which can include the loss of BYOT privileges for any amount of time as determined by the administration as well as other disciplinary actions.

### Cell Phones/Apple Watches

Teachers in grades 3-5 may allow students to use their cell phone for instructional purposes only. Cell phones, Apple watches and cameras may not be used to take pictures or video in the school setting unless requested by the teacher for instructional purposes. Unless otherwise directed by a teacher for instructional use, cell phones are to remain in your child's backpack and turned off during the school day. Student cell phones or Apple watches are not be used to text or call parents/guardians at any time.

Parents are encouraged to attend any community meetings regarding digital citizenship.

## CAFETERIA/LUNCH

Lunch should be a relaxing and fun time for students. To that end, cafeteria rules have been established to help create a safe and enjoyable atmosphere. Please review these rules with your children.

### Cafeteria Rules:

1. Enter and exit the cafeteria in a neat line on "Zone 0" voice.
2. Get all utensils and condiments before sitting down.
3. Purchase all items when you go through the line.
4. Gather all trash and clean up your area when your table is dismissed.
5. Stay in your seat with your feet under the table and keep your hands to yourself.
6. Talk to the people at your table.
7. Raise your hand and wait for permission before leaving your seat.
8. Only eat food you brought or bought.
9. Listen to the cafeteria monitors.
10. Use proper dining manners.

Please send items in your child's lunch that can be easily managed by the child. Carbonated drinks and food brought from anywhere other than home are not allowed in the cafeteria. The price for a school lunch is \$2.90 (this is subject to change and dependent on any a la carte items bought). Please consider managing your child's lunch account [online](#). This way you are able to check the account daily.

Family members only are welcome to join their children for lunch. Visitors must eat at the designated Visitor's Table. Parents may only eat with their own children. Students cannot bring a friend to lunch with another parent. **In the best interest of all students and in alignment with the district's wellness policy and allergy protocol, outside restaurant food is not permitted. Parents should plan to purchase a school lunch or bring a sack lunch from home for themselves. We appreciate your understanding of this request as we work to reduce disruption, promote healthy school lunches, and diligently protect our students with allergies.**

Parents are welcome to sign their child out for lunch time and eat at the outside picnic tables. Students must be signed back in at the front office before returning to class. If someone other than the parents want to eat with a student, these people must be listed as a Skyward emergency contact.

To preserve instructional time, parents are asked to wait at the cafeteria to join their children for lunch and to say "goodbye" to their children in the cafeteria. Don't forget to sign in/out in the office and wear a visitor's sticker.

## CELEBRATIONS

We love to honor and celebrate students at Bethesda. There will be two class parties scheduled during the year. The parties will be a time for students to participate in fun activities with their classmates. It is vital that staff and parents be mindful of food allergies when planning for celebrations. Food allergies can be life threatening and are a serious concern to all schools. We have several students with serious food allergies. Therefore, we will make every effort to protect students with allergies while not taking away from traditional childhood celebrations. The guidelines listed below are in accordance with the district's Wellness Policy.

### Class Parties

All celebrations must be pre-planned with the classroom teacher. The room parents and party planners for each classroom organize classroom celebrations and coordinate the plans with the teachers. As we work to keep our buildings and children safe, parties will no longer be open to all family members. **Only the party planners (2 per class) and PTO Board members will be allowed to attend/facilitate parties.** All foods for scheduled schoolwide and classroom celebrations must be pre-packaged with ingredient and nutritional values listed. Food made from home may not be distributed during the school day or brought into the classroom.

## Birthdays

Students love to celebrate birthdays at school, as it is a memorable time to share with teachers and friends. In an effort to abide by the [WCS Wellness Policy](#) as well as address the increasing number of students with food allergies or diabetes, we are asking all parents to follow these simple guidelines when planning for your child's birthday this year. The Bethesda staff feels strongly that by using these options, we are promoting a healthy lifestyle and maximizing learning:

- Send in a non-edible treat for everyone in the classroom such as pencils, bookmarks, etc.
- Donate a book in your child's name to our school library.
- Donate an educational game or book to your child's classroom teacher in their honor.
- Have a family member come and read to the class.

Your child's birthday will also be recognized on our school-wide announcements and they will receive a treat from the office. Again the emphasis is on honoring your child on their birthday without a focus on food.

Individual invitations to private birthday parties may not be distributed during school hours unless there is an invitation for every child in the class or one for every student that is the same gender as your child (i.e. for your daughter, an invitation for every girl in the class). There is no need to put student names on these invitations as there will be enough for one per child. Please note that these invitations will be distributed to students in your child's class only. Invitations sent to school where there is not one for every child in the classroom will be returned home.

## CHILD FIND

Child Find is how Williamson County Schools identify students who may be having problems. This may include children who are gifted as well as students who have trouble seeing or hearing, need special education services, or need supports to learn. It is important to find these children and give them the help they need as early as possible. Families concerned about how a child is doing can refer the child for screening by calling Student Support Services at 615 472-4130.

## CLINIC/ILLNESS

We are very fortunate to have a full time nurse on staff. She is committed to serving all students and staff. If a student becomes ill or injured at school, the teacher will have

the student evaluated by the school nurse. Through her examination and in accordance with the district illness policy, the nurse will determine treatment or if the the student does not meet criteria to stay in school. The nurse will notify parents if a student becomes significantly ill or injured. The school is not equipped for prolonged care of your sick child. **We ask that you or an emergency contact pick up your child within the hour that you are called.** The school nurse may only administer medications that are provided and authorized by the parent/guardian. Refer to the WCS Medication Administration Protocol for guidance.

Students will be checked for head lice by the school nurse when demonstrating symptoms of infestation. Parents of students with live lice or an active infestation will be asked to pick up their child as soon as possible to begin the treatment process. The student may return to school only after the hair has been treated appropriately and the parent presents proof of treatment.

When determining whether your child is well enough to attend school, please refer to the Williamson County Schools Illness Guidelines found at

<https://www.wcs.edu/pdf/health/Illness-Guidelines.pdf>

Please note that your child should not be sent to school until he/she has been fever free for at least 24 hours without taking a fever reducing medication.

If you have any other questions regarding health services, policies or procedures, please visit the Williamson County Schools Health Services Site at

<https://www.wcs.edu/district/departments/health/>

## **CUSTODIAL ISSUES/PARENTING PLAN**

Custodial parents must inform the school immediately upon any changes in custody, especially court restraining orders. Non-custodial parents requesting information for a student should provide the child's teacher with self-addressed, stamped envelopes for periodically mailing information or arrangements may be made for the child's teacher to collect information to be transported with the student to the non-custodial parent. All families with a parenting plan must have that plan on file in our office along with any subsequent orders or changes to the parenting plan. Students will be unable to register for school without a parenting plan or court order establishing the primary care parent, should any court order exist.

# DISCIPLINE

In most cases, discipline concerns can be handled in the classroom by the teacher. If a child is sent to the office, the following will occur:

1. Talk with all of the students involved individually.
2. Investigate the situation.
3. Document what has occurred and ask student to reflect on situation and determine better choices that they could have made.
4. Call/email a parent to explain the situation.
5. Determine consequences: (may choose one or a combination)
  - a. Warning only
  - b. Time out in the office
  - c. Loss of privileges
  - d. Parent conference with principal and student
  - e. In-School Suspension
  - f. Out of school suspension
  - g. "Thinking/Reflection Table" at lunch or in the office

# DRESS CODE

Students should dress appropriately for comfort, weather and learning. Bethesda Elementary will follow the guidelines set forth by the county school board policy [6.310](#).

1. Tops of shoulders must have a minimum of a 1-inch strap unless otherwise covered by an opaque top garment;
2. Skin and undergarments must be covered with opaque clothing from the underarm to mid-thigh.
3. Mid-thigh is defined as the mid-point between the waist and mid-knee;
4. All pants, trousers, shorts and skirts must be held at the waist;
5. Leggings and other compression-style garments may be worn so long as an opaque top garment covers the private body parts;
6. Hats may be worn in buildings **on special occasion as permitted by administration**;
7. Appropriate shoes are required;
8. Tennis shoes with non-marking soles are **required** for physical education.
9. It is **recommended** that students wear tennis shoes for recess. Please do not send students in flip flops or shoes without a back as this can result in injury.

Any type of clothing, apparel or accessory, including that which denotes such students' membership in or affiliation with any gang associated with criminal activities is not permitted (TCA 49-6-4215).

Student uniforms related to student extra-curricular activities (band, cheerleading, dance, sports team, etc.) must be in compliance with this policy during the academic day.

Any apparel or dress that advertises or promotes products or activity prohibited by law or by the Board of Education is prohibited (e.g., profanity, illustrations, or suggestive language, etc).

Administrators and teachers shall enforce the dress code policy. The principal or his/her designee shall be the final judge as to compliance with the dress code. Parents will be notified and asked to bring appropriate clothing if a student is in violation of the dress code.

## **EMERGENCY DISMISSAL**

Director of Schools or a public relations designee from the district will use the phone system to notify you of emergency closings. The school will follow the dismissal plan on each child's emergency dismissal card on file in the office if school is dismissed early due to weather or other emergency conditions. Please make sure that the emergency dismissal information remains up-to-date.

## **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

It is vitally important in times of emergency that the school is in possession of information that will enable us to promptly and directly reach the parents. If there are any changes in your contact information throughout the year, you must notify the office immediately.

## **FAMILY TRIPS**

In response to the new Tennessee Department of Education Accountability Regulations (ESSA), which defines students as "chronically absent" after 18 absences per year, regardless of excused or unexcused, WCS schools will be more conservative than in the past in regard to excusing absences due to family trips. Family trips should be scheduled during regularly planned breaks. Family trips will not be excused except for Principal approved emergencies or in exceptional circumstances with prior approval.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Students have the opportunity to participate in several field trips as extensions of classroom activities throughout the year. Teachers will notify parents concerning field trips and send home permission forms for parent's signature. The school must have on file written permission from the parent before a student may go on a field trip. If the written permission slip is not returned by the due date, the child will not be able to attend the field trip. Students will travel by bus to and from all trips. Any exceptions to this procedure must be approved by the principal. Chaperones are not permitted to ride on the bus with students. Therefore, chaperones should plan to follow the bus in their car.

Chaperones are welcome and needed for field trips. For the safety of our Bethesda students, no siblings are allowed on school field trips. According to Williamson County School Board Policy, all chaperones **must** be Tier 3 Volunteers.

## FIRE, TORNADO, & EMERGENCY DRILLS

Fire, tornado, and emergency drills are necessary for the safety of the students and staff; therefore, we practice them throughout the year. The following safety drills are scheduled: fire drills, tornado drills, and security lockdown drills.

## HOMEWORK

Homework is an extension of the learning and allows independent practice and reinforcement of skills and concepts presented in class. In addition, it is an expectation that students read each night as research shows the vast impact it has on overall learning.

When assigning homework teachers will follow the guidelines set forth by school board policy [4.607](#). For students in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade there will be no more than 20 minutes of homework each night. For students in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade there will be no more than 40 minutes assigned each night. For students in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades there will be no more than one hour of homework nightly. This time does include time for reading either independently or with someone.

Homework is something that should be completed independently by the child. Parents are encouraged to monitor that homework is attempted or done. If a child is unable to complete work independently, this should be communicated with the child's teacher. If a child is struggling to complete homework or is spending over the maximum time allotted, please contact the teacher. The teacher needs feedback at this point so that together you can resolve the issue. We know our students and families are busy and it is not our intent to dominate all of a student's after-school hours. It is our intent to promote organization, good work habits, and responsibility in our students.

## INTERNET POLICY

(see also [Acceptable Use Policy](#)– Williamson County Schools)

In order for a student to use the Williamson County Public Schools' internet connection, a copy of the policy sent home must be read, and the contract must be signed by the student and a parent or guardian.

## LOST & FOUND

The Lost and Found is located inside the cafeteria. Check these items when you have lunch with your child or when you visit the school. Please label students' clothing such as jackets and sweaters. At times throughout the year, lost and found items are given to charity after notifying parents and allowing time to claim items.

## MEDICATION PROTOCOL

Medication procedures are consistent with *State of Tennessee Law 49-5-415* and are implemented in our schools district-wide.. Medications should be limited to those required during school hours to assure safe administration of medications for those students who require them. Please be aware of the following:

- 1) The school must have a medication authorization form completed each school year for both prescription and non-prescription medications. These forms are available in the office.
- 2) Parents, or legal guardians, must bring their child's medication into school. Students are not allowed to bring in their own medication. This includes prescription as well as non-prescription medication. Empty prescription bottles may be given to the student to take home, unless you inform the school otherwise.
- 3) Prescription medications must be in the original, pharmacy labeled container and match the doctor's orders exactly (up to 30 day supply at a time). If your child is taking an antibiotic that is prescribed for three times per day, parents should administer the medication before school, after school, and at bedtime. DO NOT send the antibiotic to school.
- 4) All over-the-counter medications, must be in the original, unopened manufacturer's packaging with the child's name affixed. You can supply over-the-counter medication with an expiration date that will not expire during the school year. Only FDA approved medications can be administered at school.
- 5) Designated school personnel will be trained to assist students with their medications on field trips. If you do not want your child to receive medication on a field trip, please notify your school nurse in writing..
- 6) Medications must be kept at school no longer than the expiration date or end of the school year, whichever is sooner. All medications not picked up by the last school day will be destroyed.

## MOMENT OF SILENCE OR PRAYER - Tennessee State Law – (TCA 49-6-1004)

In order for all students and teachers to prepare themselves for the activities of the day, a period of silence of approximately one minute in duration shall be maintained in each grade in public schools at the beginning of each school day. The teacher shall not indicate or suggest to the students any action to be taken by them during this time but shall maintain silence for the full time. It is lawful for any teacher in any of the schools of

the state to permit the voluntary participation by students or others in prayer. Nothing contained in this section shall authorize any teacher or other school authority to prescribe the form or content of any prayer.

## PARENT ONLINE COMMUNICATION

Williamson County Schools Family Access gives parents the ability to track their child's academic progress safely and securely online. Visit this [site](#) to register: \_

## PARENT - SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Ongoing communication from school to home and from home to school is essential to working together as partners in providing excellence in education for all students. Your ideas, questions, and concerns are important to the entire Bethesda Team. We welcome your notes, calls, and visits. Listed below are possible ways teachers can communicate with parents:

1. Parent Back to School Night
2. Parent Information Night/Open House
3. Parent Handbook
4. Quarterly PTO meetings
5. Weekly Teacher/Classroom newsletters
6. Teacher-parent phone calls
7. Monthly email or newsletter from the Principal - *Dragon Tales*
8. School Web Page –<https://www.wcs.edu/bes/>
1. [WCS Skyward Family Access](#)
9. Phone calls from the principal through a message system
10. Parents should also sign up for the county's district-wide In Focus digital news [www.wcs.edu](http://www.wcs.edu)

### E-mail Policy

All teachers have a published e-mail address. Although you may wish to communicate with your child's teacher by e-mail, please be aware that e-mail is not always confidential. Please do not send time sensitive information by e-mail as the system is occasionally down and teacher's instructional schedules do not allow for immediate response.

School staff will make every effort to return parent communication within 48 business hours.

## PET POLICY

Due to allergies and potential safety concerns, pets (dogs, hamsters, rabbits) are not allowed in the school building or on the school campus without permission from the classroom teacher and the administration.

## PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO GUIDELINES

Following are guidelines from the WCS office of communications regarding parents taking photographs at school events. The purpose of the guidelines is to address problems that have occurred at some schools when parents have taken pictures at school and posted them on online social media sites.

1. Parents are advised not to post on social media any pictures taken at school that include any children other than their own.
2. Picture-taking at non-public school events: These events occur before, during, and after school and include, field trips, assemblies to which the public is not invited (ex. talent show during the day, etc.) Parents are encouraged to take photos/video of their own children but should not take photos/video of other children.
3. Picture-taking at public school events: This includes events that are open to the public such as Back to School Bash, Backyard Barbeque, etc. Parents may take photos at public school events that include other people's children but should avoid posting these photos to social media
4. Class Parent Photographer: A teacher may assign a parent to be the class photographer to take pictures for the teacher. This parent may use a school-owned camera. Another alternative is to use the parent's personal camera, but save the pictures on a school-owned flash media card.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Per Tennessee State Law, elementary students are required to participate in physical activity. Physical education class and recess are examples of physical activity. Therefore, students must have a doctor's note in order to be excused from participating in recess or physical education.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Tennessee State Law – (TCA 49-6-1001)

As required by our School Board, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag each day at a designated time. No student will be compelled to participate in such exercise if the student or the student's parents or legal guardian objects on religious, philosophical or other grounds. Students not participating will remain quietly standing or sitting at their desks while others recite the Pledge of Allegiance and shall make no display that disrupts or distracts others who are reciting the Pledge.

## PROTECTING INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

Parents can help protect instructional time in the following ways:

- 1) Please make sure students have needed items for school each day.
- 2) Ensure that students arrive to school in time to be in their classrooms by 8:50 a.m.
- 3) **Try not** to schedule appointments for students during the school day.
- 4) Plan family vacations when school **is not** in session.
- 5) Only visit classrooms when scheduled with teachers.
- 6) Meet your child at the cafeteria when having lunch at school and say “goodbye” to your child in the cafeteria.
- 7) Do not go to classrooms during arrival and dismissal times.
- 8) Avoid early dismissal whenever possible. **Attendance matters!**

## RECESS & PLAYGROUND SAFETY

Students will have recess for up to 30 minutes each day.

We strive hard to put safety first at Bethesda. To that end we have established common playground rules. Please review these rules with your children.

- Respect the rights and feelings of others.
- You may not cause a problem for yourself or anyone else on the playground.
- Rough play will not be tolerated (touch football only, at teacher discretion)
- Learn to interact with others in a positive manner – cooperate.
- Play fairly and take turns.
- Rocks, sticks, dirt... are to remain on the ground.
- Playground equipment must be used correctly. Rules for slides, climbing equipment and swings are reviewed at the beginning of each year and throughout the year as needed.

Staff members observing children on the playground are equipped with a first aid kit and a two-way radio for additional safety. Children may be removed from play for a “cool-down” period if involved in unsafe playground behavior.

Children go to recess everyday unless it is raining or extremely cold/hot. Please keep this in mind when helping your child select clothing and shoes for the day. Bethesda will follow Williamson County Schools Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) regarding whether students will go outside or have indoor recess. This SOP was carefully written by a team of people including medical professionals to determine what is safe for students. As you know, we all value recess time and the opportunity for students to get some exercise; however, the effects of cold and heat exposure can be very uncomfortable and even life threatening. Therefore, guidelines have been established.

- Students will not go outside for recess when the outdoor temperature including wind chill is less than 32 degrees. In addition, if the wind chill is less than 40 degrees with precipitation, students will not go outside.
- When the heat index is between 90 F and 100 F, the principal will monitor and consider the appropriateness of outdoor activities. Recess time may be decreased.
- When the heat index is 100 F or greater students will not go outside for recess.

Finally, the county provided guidelines regarding appropriate dress. The following has been recommended:

- Wind chill below 60 degrees: jacket or long sleeves recommended
- Wind chill below 50 degrees: coat and long pants recommended
- Wind chill below 40 degrees: gloves and hats with previously recommended gear necessary

## SACC (School Age Child Care)

SACC offers before and after school care (6:30 am - 6:00 pm) at Bethesda. SACC also has a summer program. Please click [here](#) for more information.

## SCHOOL SAFETY

A school safety plan is in place and has been vetted by local law enforcement. The following school safety policies have been established:

1. All school doors are locked throughout the day.
2. All visitors will be required to present photo identification and state their reason for visiting to enter the building.
3. Parents, visitors, and volunteers must sign in and out in the office and wear a visitor badge.
4. Visitors are only to go to the area designated upon sign in.
5. Parking is only allowed in designated parking places.
6. Parents and visitors must schedule appointments to visit classrooms.
7. Volunteers or school personnel escort visitors touring the school.
8. A school nurse staffs the clinic and notifies parents by phone when a student has an accident or becomes ill.
9. Medication policies established by the school system are followed.
10. Students are expected to follow safety guidelines established by the school and classroom teachers.
11. Students must have written permission from parents to change the bus the student rides at dismissal
12. Office personnel will verify the identification of individuals when releasing a student. Parents must communicate, preferably in writing, the permission for someone to pick up a student other than the parent.

13. Teachers and teacher assistants supervise students and direct traffic during arrival and dismissal following safety policies.
14. The custodial and maintenance staffs work to keep the school clean and free from safety hazards.
15. The State Fire Marshal inspects the school annually to ensure fire safety policies are followed.
16. An emergency dismissal form is on file with the dismissal plan for students in the event that school is dismissed early due to weather conditions, power failure, or hazardous conditions.

## STUDENT ENROLLMENT

All returning students will register online using their Family Access account login. If you choose not to use the online registration, paper packets can be picked up in the front office.

## SCHOOL IMMUNIZATION LAW

### **CHAPTER 76, SECTION 15**

“No child shall, except as hereinafter provided, be admitted to school except upon presentation of a physician’s certificate, that the child has been successfully immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, mumps, and rubella.” Requirements for kindergarten also include immunizations against Hepatitis B and chickenpox (or physician-documented history of disease). NOTE: Children exempt from physical examination and immunizations must present a statement signed by the parent or guardian upon entrance.

## STUDENT PROGRESS

Student progress may be accessed through Skyward Family Access for students in grades 3 – 5. Parents may request that a printed copy of their report card be sent home each nine weeks. Students in grades K – 2 will have receive report cards sent home each nine weeks.

Progress reports will be sent home before the fifth week of each nine week grading period. Teachers offer opportunities for parents to schedule conferences. Parents and teachers may request conferences at any time during the school year. Teachers will notify parents at any point if students are failing to show progress toward standards.

# TOYS

Students are not allowed to bring toys, computer games, virtual pets, trading cards, etc. to school. We are working to keep students focused on learning. Classroom teachers will communicate to parents any exceptions to this policy for specific dates, times. The teacher will state when it is appropriate to bring items from home; what these specific items may be; and what they will be used for during instruction/class time.

Students are not allowed to bring focus/concentration tools (fidget spinners, stress balls, silent fidgets, etc.) to school without prior discussion and approval from parents and teacher.

# TRANSPORTATION

*Arrival begins at 8:30.*

## Car Arrival:

1. Follow the traffic pattern around the school building.
2. Parents **may not** leave children at the front of the building before the doors open at 8:30.
3. An adult will stand at the entrance of the circle drive and direct traffic into two lanes.
4. Students will remain in their cars until all cars have stopped.
5. Cars must NOT move until directed. This is for the safety of students walking to the sidewalk.
6. Students will be permitted to exit their cars when all cars in the lanes have stopped.
7. The adult at the crosswalk will direct cars to leave one lane at a time once all students are on the sidewalk.
8. Repeat.

**PARENTS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO DROP STUDENTS OFF IN THE PARKING LOT.** All car riders are expected to follow arrival procedures.

## Dismissal begins at 3:50pm

- Parents will be given two car tags. You may pick up additional tags in the front office for \$1.00 each if needed. Upon arrival follow these instructions:
- The staff directs cars to form two lanes with cars pulling up to the designated area.
- Staff collects car tags.
- When your car is positioned for pick up, **please turn off your car engine for safety.**
- The staff will dismiss students to cars.

Your patience and consideration for the safety of students is appreciated. Our car rider line typically takes 15 minutes; however, at the beginning of the year it will be longer due to ensuring everyone is following rules for student safety.

### Bus Riders

Students are expected to behave in a safe and respectful manner and to follow directions given by the bus driver. Please review Williamson County School bus policy [3.400](#). We ask you to read it with your child. This policy will be strictly followed for the safety of all children. Students are to stay seated on the bus, demonstrate self-control, and talk quietly. No food is allowed to be eaten on the bus. **Riding the school bus is a privilege. Any inappropriate behavior will result in disciplinary action which may include suspension from riding the bus.** Specific questions about bus routes and times for bus arrival should be addressed to the school system transportation department (472-4950) or checked on the website above.

Parents can also sign up with Safe Stop to track their student's bus. For more information go to this website

<https://www.wcs.edu/district/departments/transportation/bus-routes/>

### Bus Changes

***Please plan ahead.*** If a student is to ride a different bus (space must be available on the bus) on a specific date, the parent ***must*** send a note or email stating the bus change, date, and reason to the teacher. A bus pass will be issued for the student that must be shown to the bus driver. ***Only make changes by phone in cases of emergency.*** If a phone call is necessary for an emergency bus change, it must be communicated by **3:00**. Students without written permission will be sent home on their assigned bus.

### Transportation Changes

***Please plan ahead.*** Send an email or note to your child's their teacher indicating any change in transportation for that day (from car to bus, bus to car, or regular bus to different bus). ***Only make changes by phone in cases of emergency.*** If a phone call is necessary for an emergency transportation change, it must be communicated by **3:00**. **We will not accept transportation changes after that time.** Parents are not allowed to take children off of school buses. Students without written permission for a transportation change will be sent home according to their daily dismissal procedure.

## VISITORS

1. All visitors must enter and exit through the main office doors.
2. Parents, visitors, and volunteers must present photo identification to enter the building. We will hold this ID until you sign out.

3. All visitors must sign in and out in the office and wear a visitor or volunteer sticker/badge at all times.
4. Parents and visitors must schedule appointments to visit classrooms in the event of a conference or volunteering in the classroom.
5. School personnel escort visitors touring the school.
6. Office personnel must verify the identification of individuals when releasing a student. Parents must communicate in writing the permission for someone to pick up a student other than the parent. Office personnel will ask for a driver's license as an ID when someone comes to school to check out a student.

## VOLUNTEERS

The school team appreciates the efforts and support of the many parent volunteers who work in partnership to provide a safe and caring learning environment focused on the academic achievement of all students. Volunteer workers are needed. Please notify your child's teacher or the PTO if you are interested.

Background Check and Fingerprinting – The school district established a three-tiered guideline to protect children and to continue to maintain the high levels of volunteerism that we enjoy in our district. Please note that the Volunteer Application and Confidentiality Agreement is an annual expectation. All parents and community members who wish to volunteer at any level must complete that paperwork at Bethesda. If you completed the district requirements for background checks and fingerprinting in a county school last year, then you are on our BES approved list. If you have not yet done so, you may want to consider this step.

Please note the three tiers. For district information regarding the tiers and how to be a volunteer click [here](#).

**\*Tier 1** does not require documentation. Tier 1 volunteers are those who volunteer occasionally; in a highly public setting with little or no contact with students; and who are under constant supervision by Williamson County Schools personnel.

**\*Tier 2** requires the Volunteer Application and Confidentiality Agreement. Tier 2 volunteers are regular volunteers with student contact but are under constant supervision of Williamson County personnel.

**\*Tier 3** requires the Volunteer Application and Confidentiality Agreement and a criminal background fingerprint check through the Williamson County Schools Human Resources Department. Tier 3 volunteers are those who have unsupervised contact with students on or off campus. Parents who work with small instructional groups of students during the school day or who chaperone field trips are considered Tier 3.

Classroom volunteers must schedule work dates and times with teachers. Volunteers may not bring young children to the classrooms or teacher workroom for safety reasons and to alleviate any distraction from the current instruction taking place.

## WEAPONS

No weapons of any kind are allowed on school property. Any item that constitutes a weapon will be confiscated and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

## WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

If a move or other circumstance requires a withdrawal from school, a withdrawal form must be completed, all textbooks must be turned in, and a student must be in good standing with the library and cafeteria. Once all of the qualifications are met, a parent/legal guardian may withdraw a student from school.

## ZERO TOLERANCE AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Bethesda teachers and staff work to create a safe learning environment for students utilizing PBIS. The goal of school discipline is to create an environment where learning can occur and students learn self-direction and self-discipline. Parents should consult the student section in Board Policy [6.3061](#) and [6.309](#) and [6.316](#) to better understand district consequences from misbehavior.

It is also important to become familiar with the BES PBIS plan. We follow all WCS policies, procedures and guidelines concerning discipline for these offenses.

## APPENDIX

### SECTION 504 NOTICE

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are acts which prohibit discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal assistance, among others. Both acts define a person with a disability as anyone who:

- has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (major life activities include caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working);
- has a record of such impairment;

- is regarded as having such an impairment, or has had a record of such an impairment.

In order to fulfill its obligations under Section 504 and the ADA, Williamson County Schools recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person on the basis of a disability will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs or practices in the school system.

The school district has specific responsibilities under both acts, which include the responsibility to evaluate and determine if the child is eligible under Section 504/ADA, and to then afford access to appropriate educational accommodations.

If the parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the School District, he/she has the right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer. For further information, contact Jill Merritt, 504 Coordinator at 615-472-4000.

### F.E.R.P.A.

Pursuant to the terms of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. §1232(g), Williamson County Schools designates the following personally identifiable information contained in a student's educational record as "directory information", and it will disclose the following student information without prior written consent: name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, weight and height of members of an athletic team, and most recent previous educational agency or institution attended. Parents must notify their child's school in writing if they do not want his/her directory information released. Under provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and other federal law, directory information will be provided to recruiters from the armed services upon request. Parents must notify the school in writing if they do not want his/her directory information released to military recruiters.

### HOMELESS EDUCATION

You qualify for consideration under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act if any of the following apply: if you live in a shelter, motel, vehicle, campground, abandoned building or trailer, or other inadequate accommodations, or if you live with friends or relatives because of the inability to afford adequate housing. If any of these apply, you may be entitled to all services, rights and protection provided under this law.

Your children have the right to attend a school no matter where you live or how long you have lived there, continue in the school last attended before becoming homeless (if that is your choice and it is feasible) and receive transportation to the school last attended prior to becoming homeless if requested. Students, if qualified, are allowed to enroll in a school without a permanent address, without school records or without proof of immunization. These will be obtained by school personnel. For further information, contact Denise Goodwin, Asst. Superintendent of Elementary Schools at 472-4000.

### RIGHTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents may access information about child advocacy groups and information on how to contact the state department of education for information on student rights and services from the following agencies:

Tennessee Department of Education Legal Services Division, 710 James Robertson Parkway, Andrew Johnson Tower, 5th floor, Nashville, TN 37243-0380, 615-741-2851, Fax: 615-253-5567 or 615-532-9412.

Williamson County Schools Student Support Services, 1320 West Main Street, Franklin, TN 37064, 615-472-4130, Fax: 615-595-4930.

### CHILD ADVOCACY GROUPS CONTACT INFORMATION

In addition to the state and local resources available to parents and children, there are many agencies and organizations that offer support, information, training, and help in advocating for persons with disabilities in Tennessee. A few of these organizations are listed below:

The ARC of Williamson County, 129 W. Fowlkes Street, Suite 151, Franklin, TN 37064, 615-790-5815, Fax: (615) 790-5891

Support and Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP), 712 Professional Plaza, Greeneville, TN 37745, 615-463-2310, Web: <http://www.tnstep.org>

Tennessee Disability Law and Advocacy Center (DLAC), 2416 21st Avenue South, Suite 100, Nashville, TN 37212, Phone: 615-298-1080, Toll free: 1-800-342-1660, email: [GetHelp@DLACTN.org](mailto:GetHelp@DLACTN.org).

Tennessee Voices for Children, 1315 8th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37203, 615-269-7751, Fax: 615-269-8914, TN Toll Free: 800-670-9882, [TVC@tnvoices.org](mailto:TVC@tnvoices.org).

These are but a few of the organizations available to help with information, training, and advocacy. For a more extensive list visit the Tennessee Disability Services-Disability Pathfinder

Database:<http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/tennesseepathfinder/ServiceFinder/Default.aspx>.

This information is provided as a service to individuals seeking additional avenues for help and information. The Department of Education and Williamson County Schools do not intend this as an endorsement or recommendation for any individual organization or service represented in this list.

### WILLIAMSON COUNTY SCHOOLS STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Williamson County Schools in its employment of personnel and in its educational activities with students does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability. Employees of Williamson County Schools are appointed as coordinators of the various activities ensuring compliance with federal laws and regulations including the U.S. Department of Education regulations implementing: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Vocational Education Programs Guidelines for Eliminating Discrimination and Denial of Services on the Basis of Race, Color, and National Origin, Sex and Handicap. U.S. Department of Justice regulations implementing: Title II of the American Disabilities Act of 1990. Employees include Title VI & ADA Coordinator Leigh Webb, Title IX Coordinator Dana Ausbrooks, IDEA Coordinator Carol Hendlmyer, and Title II Coordinator Laurette Carle.

Contact them at: 1320 West Main Street, Franklin, TN 37064, 615-472-4000. Individuals who need assistance or have a complaint should contact the above listed individuals. Williamson County Schools provides equal access to youth groups such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.