



Parent/Student Handbook 2016-2017



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Poplar Tree Elementary, Home of the Panthers! This Parent-Student Handbook contains important information about school policies and procedures. If you have any questions and/or concerns about anything not covered in the handbook, please contact the school office at (703-633-7400) between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

SCHOOL ARRIVAL

Children should arrive at school no earlier than 8:20 a.m. The school day begins at 8:40 a.m. Busses begin unloading at 8:30 a.m.

TARDINESS

Children are considered tardy when they arrive after 8:40 a.m. We appreciate your help and cooperation in encouraging your child to be on time. **Parents must bring students into the Main Office when arriving late for school.**

STUDENTS WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Many children walk to school. Crossing guards and patrols are posted along routes for the safety of walking students. In order to ensure supervision of our walkers by patrols and guards, students should time their morning trip in order to arrive at school no earlier than 8:20 a.m. At dismissal, students are required to leave the building and school grounds promptly and go directly home.

KISS & RIDE

The parking area on the side of the school has been designated as the "Kiss and Ride" area for loading and unloading students in private cars. **The school parking lot in front of the school is closed to all traffic other than FCPS school bus traffic from 8:15 - 9:15 a.m. and 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. Please do not enter the front parking lot when buses present and are loading and unloading the students.**

BUS RIDERS

Bus transportation is provided for those children who live more than one mile from the school or when an unsafe condition exists. School bus riders in FCPS are required to observe **rules of safety and good citizenship** while riding on a bus and while waiting at the designated bus stops. Standards for safe, courteous conduct will be in effect beginning the first day of school. It is essential that bus riders cooperate and adhere to the bus regulations. All children will receive a copy of **Regulations for Pupils Riding School Buses**. All parents are requested to review this information with their children and return a signed acknowledgment form to school. **Bus driver reports of student misconduct occurring more than once can result in suspension of bus riding privileges.**

PERMISSION TO GO HOME WITH ANOTHER STUDENT

Permission for students to go home with another student may be granted for **school-related projects only**. **A note (handwritten or emailed to the teacher and main office staff) is required (by noon) from parents of BOTH students if a child is to go home with another child after school.**

EARLY RELEASE OF STUDENTS

If you wish your child to be dismissed early, a note should be sent to the teacher that day. Parents or guardians must come into the Main Office to sign out a student. Students will remain with their teacher until notified by office personnel. Release of children to **adults** other than parents or guardians is prohibited unless authorized by the parents or guardians.

ABSENCES AND LATE ARRIVALS

All absences must be supported by a valid excuse. When your child will be absent from school or arriving late, please call the Attendance Line (available 24 hours) at **(703) 633-7474 by 9:00 a.m.** For absences that will occur in the future (out of town plans for example), parents are requested to provide the school with a written note before the absence occurs.

SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY

The safety of our students is a priority. School security must be everyone's responsibility. All visitors (including parents) must report to the Main Office immediately upon entering the building, sign in, and obtain an identification badge to wear within the building. Staff members will question all adults/visitors not wearing a visitor's or FCPS identification badge. As a safety precaution, students use the "buddy system" when traveling outside the classroom.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS/VISITORS

Volunteers are always welcome at Poplar Tree Elementary! We encourage you to spend time at our school – come to a performance, join your child for lunch, and participate as a classroom volunteer. However, in an effort to avoid instructional interruptions, we ask that you make a request for a classroom observation, in advance, with the school principal. A classroom observation (limited to 30-45 minutes) will be approved on an individual basis. Please note that non-school aged children may not accompany parents when visiting or volunteering.

EMERGENCY SCHEDULE CHANGES

Notification of any decisions regarding closing or delays due to inclement weather or other emergencies will be communicated as soon as the decision is made by:

- Message Alert System
- FCPS Website
- Electronic Mail (Keep In Touch)
- Cable Channel 21 (Comcast, Cox, and Verizon)
- Radio and Television

KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

Fairfax County Public Schools offers a kindergarten program to any Fairfax County resident whose fifth birthday falls on or before Sept. 30 of the given school year. Commonwealth of Virginia laws do not permit waivers or consideration based on student's skills for a child born after Sept. 30. All children who will be five years of age by Sept. 30 must be enrolled in school unless the school principal is notified by the parents that they do not wish to enroll until the following year.

STUDENT REGISTRATION

Before a child is admitted for the first time to Fairfax County Public Schools, the child must have a comprehensive physical examination completed no earlier than 12 months prior to beginning kindergarten. The law requires that every child furnish a certificate from a licensed physician stating that the following immunization shots have been administered: diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, mumps, measles, German measles (rubella), hepatitis B and varicella. **Prior to entering sixth grade**, all students in Virginia are required to receive a booster dose of Tdap vaccine if at least five years have passed since the last dose of tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine (DTP, DTaP, DT, or Td). Students lacking required documentation of immunization will be barred from attendance. Schools will provide the necessary forms. It is the parent's responsibility to return the completed forms to the school. The original birth certificate of the child and proof of residency are also required.

EMERGENCY CARE INFORMATION FORM

The main purpose of the Emergency Care Information Form is to help us locate the parents in event of illness or emergency involving a child. Hospitals and private doctors will not give emergency medication or treatment or perform any kind of surgery except when the parent or guardian is present. It is very important that we be able to locate you at any time. Please list phone numbers of neighbors who will know where you are for emergency calls and who may pick up your child when he/she feels ill and you are not at home. In special cases, you may wish to call and give office staff a number where you can be reached during the day. Also, if your child has any allergies or serious medical conditions, please list them on the form. **It is essential that the information on the Emergency Care Information Form be updated and kept current throughout the school year.**

SCHOOL HEALTH ROOM

The Fairfax County Health Department and Fairfax County Public School System participate in a partnership to offer each school access to a Health Room, a Public Health Nurse (Registered Nurse), and a School Health Aide (on site in Health Room during school hours). The goal of this partnership is to promote a safe and healthy environment in which to maximize your child's educational experience. The School Health Aide or office staff will contact parents when students become ill or injured during the school day.

MEDICATION

The School is not permitted to administer any medications unless a parent has filled out a Medical Permission Form that may be obtained in the school office/school health room or on the FCPS website. Students that are required to take medication for more than ten days **must have** the Medical Permission Form signed by their physician. Parents are required to bring any medications to school in the original container labeled by the physician or pharmacy. Any questions about medication should be directed to the School Health Aide at 703-633-7410.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER

Please notify the main office immediately if your address, home, or work phone number changes. It is vital that the information on the emergency care form remain current.

WITHDRAWALS AND TRANSFERS

If your child must be withdrawn or transferred from school, please notify the office in writing a week prior to the withdrawal to provide an opportunity for completion of school records and a check of property accountability (textbooks, library books, etc.).

HOMEWORK AND MAKE-UP WORK

The purpose of homework assignments is to enrich, enhance, and/or extend school experience. Some of the desirable outcomes of good homework are growth in responsibility, training in good work habits, opportunities for increasing self-direction, reinforcing skills, and learning how to budget time wisely. Allowances for individual differences are considered when making homework assignments. Generally, assignments in the primary grades do not exceed 30 minutes of work each night, Monday through Thursday. In grades 4-6, homework assignments should not exceed one hour. Classroom teachers will provide parents with their procedures regarding "make-up assignments" at Back-to-School Night. Special requests for family trips should be reasonable. **Although the school is willing to cooperate with parents in these cases, it should be understood that teachers cannot duplicate all missed assignments and work cannot be provided in advance of lengthy absences.** Standard assignments such as journal writing or other curriculum-related tasks will be given whenever possible. Parents are expected to make sure that students complete these special assignments.

PROGRESS REPORTING TO PARENTS

Progress reports will be sent home one week after the end of each marking period. The purpose of the progress report is to help each parent and student identify a student's strengths and weaknesses and to help teachers evaluate each student and plan their instruction accordingly. Teachers will request conferences with parents at the end of the first grading period. Additional conferences are encouraged and may be requested by the teacher, the parent, and/or the school administrators. To protect valuable instructional time, conferences should be planned either before or after the regular instructional day. Parents interested in having a conference are asked to send a note with your child or send an email message to the teacher. You may also call the Main Office at (703) 633-7400 to leave a message in the teacher's voicemail.

SCHOOL TO HOME COMMUNICATION

Poplar Tree publishes a weekly newsletter. The PAW PRINT is sent home every Friday via News You Choose email. The Panther PAWS is published each month on the website at www.fcps.edu/PoplarTreeES.

STUDENT RECORDS

All student records maintained by the school are open for review by the child's parent or guardian. These records may not be released to anyone outside the school without written permission from the parent or guardian. If you wish to review your child's records, please contact the school to set up an appointment.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Student Right and Responsibilities, A Guide for Families, has been created to help you and your child understand the rules and expectations in school, which affect students going to or returning from school, and at school-sponsored activities. For your convenience, the entire booklet, including links to referenced regulations, can be found online at www.fcps.edu.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

All students are expected to dress appropriately for a K-12 educational environment. Any clothing that interferes with or disrupts the educational environment is unacceptable. Clothing should fit, be neat and clean, and conform to standards of safety, good taste, and decency. Undesirable clothing items are as follows:

1. Halter, strapless, tube or sleeveless tops, backless blouses
2. Cropped tops allowing midriff exposure
3. Low riding pants or skirts allowing hip exposure
4. Head coverings (**Unless required for religious or medical purposes**)
5. Any clothing displaying language or images that are offensive or promote illegal or violent conduct, such as gang symbols, weapons, drugs, threats, etc.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE and SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

The Responsive Classroom approach to teaching and learning fosters safe, challenging, and joyful elementary classrooms and schools. Teachers will use this teaching approach with students to develop standards of behavior to maintain an atmosphere that will maximize learning throughout the school building and build positive social skills. No student will be allowed to engage in any behavior that is not in his/her best interest or in the best interest of others, or is disruptive to the instructional program or staff of Poplar Tree Elementary. Certain forms of misconduct such as fighting, discourteous behavior, and other chronic misbehavior will result in immediate administrative action. Poplar Tree school expectations are: to be Respectful, to be Responsible, to have Integrity, to Care, and to be Honest and be a positive participant.

LOST AND FOUND

Please label outer clothing and lunchboxes with your child's name, so lost items can be returned to your child. All items that are found in school will be placed in the lost and found area currently located in the cafeteria.

ARTICLES BROUGHT TO SCHOOL

Electronic games, toys, and large amounts of money should not be brought to school. The school will not assume responsibility for the loss of such items.

TELEPHONE USE BY STUDENTS

Children are not permitted to make telephone calls during the school day except in cases of emergency. In case of student illness, the School Health Aide or office staff will make any calls home. Please help your child develop a set routine of placing items, which must be brought to school such as money, lunch, homework or books in a designated place to avoid leaving them behind. In the event that it is necessary to bring forgotten items to a student during school hours, parents are to leave the items in the Main Office. We would like our classrooms to be free from interruptions.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

The Office of Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) is dedicated to all FCPS' students and school communities. We believe daily access to food and nutrition is essential for children to succeed and reach their full potential.

Breakfast - Students \$1.75; Adults \$2.20

Elementary Lunch - Students \$3; Adults \$4.25

Middle and High School Lunch - Students \$3.25; Adults \$4.25

Double Deal Entrée - A Second Entree with Complete lunch \$2.25

THREE WAYS TO PURCHASE MEALS

1. **On Line Using www.MySchoolBucks.com**
This user-friendly service is free, convenient, private and secure. Once the account is open, parents can check the fund account at any time.
2. **Check**
Make checks payable to "(School Name) Food Services" and bring the check to the food service manager's office. A local address and phone number are required to be either printed or handwritten on the check. The student name and PIN number are required on the check memo line.
3. **Cash**
Cash may be brought to the food service manager's office for deposit on student's account, or students may pay cash on a daily basis.

CAFETERIA EXPECTATIONS

It is the right of every student to eat lunch and socialize in an atmosphere that is **safe, orderly, and calm**. Therefore, students must adhere to the following expectations:

- Use good manners at all times
- Always sit safely and properly in your seat
- Use inside voices at all times
- Raise your hand if you need assistance
- Clean up your eating area before leaving

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips that support the curriculum are scheduled for your child's class during the school year. A signed permission form to participate in a school field trip must be returned to the teacher in advance of the trip. In case of a delayed school opening, field trips will be **automatically** cancelled and rescheduled when possible. Parents may be asked to chaperone on school-related field trips. Fairfax County School Board regulations do not authorize younger siblings to ride buses or attend field trips with parent chaperones.

STANDARDS OF LEARNING (SOL) AND PROGRAM OF STUDIES (POS)

The Virginia Board of Education adopted the Standards of Learning (SOL) in specified subject areas. The Standards of Learning (SOL) provide a framework of instructional objectives for kindergarten through high school. Students in elementary school are tested in grades 3 - 6 to ensure that they are meeting curriculum objectives.

Program of Studies (POS) is the framework of objectives used to determine instructional emphasis for all subjects at all grade levels, kindergarten through grade 6. POS objectives provide the foundation for classroom instruction in Fairfax County Public Schools.

SPECIAL PROGRAM SERVICES

Advanced Academic Programs - Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)

Advanced Academic Programs provide challenging learning experiences that are designed to meet the unique learning profile of a broad range of advanced learners. Through a continuum of opportunities, students engage in complex subject matter, preparing them for more challenging and rigorous classes as they advance in grade level. Children identified for FCPS advanced academic services exhibit exceptional performance capability in academic, intellectual, and creative endeavors. In order to meet their needs and develop to their potential, these learners require a differentiated curriculum in the four core subject areas. Poplar Tree offers the full Advanced Academic continuum – Level II-III and the Level IV Center Program.

Band and Strings – Every child in every school will receive a well-rounded education that includes a comprehensive, sequential, and high quality program of the fine arts taught by certified fine arts specialists. In addition to music and art classes, students in grades 4-6 can sign up for strings and students in grades 5-6 can sign up for band. Itinerant instrumental music teachers provide band and strings instruction to interested students.

Elementary School Counselors – Fairfax County Public Schools K-12 counseling programs provide a data-driven comprehensive model, which empowers students to become independent and productive individuals through a developmentally age-appropriate program addressing academic, social, emotional, and career counseling services. Our school counselors work directly with students in individual and group counseling sessions as well as in classroom guidance lessons. Students may refer themselves or be referred by school staff or parents.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) – The mission of ESOL services is to prepare students to be college and career ready by developing students' academic English language proficiency through integrated content-based language instruction. ESOL services foster academic achievement, critical thinking and problem solving through engaging curricula, professional development and advocacy for English learners. Poplar Tree Elementary provides services for English Language Learners as an integrated part of classroom instruction for meeting students' needs.

Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES)/Language Through Content (LTC) - The Foreign Language in the Elementary/Language through Content (FLES/LTC) Program helps students learn a world language through Science and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics) integrated content. At Poplar Tree, we provide FLES/LTC – Spanish language learning opportunities to all students from grades K through 6th.

School Age Child Care (SACC) – SACC provides fun, safe, and educational care for children in grades K-6 before school, after school, and during school vacations in most Fairfax County Elementary Schools. The SACC program serves children five days a week, Mondays-Fridays. SACC does not provide drop-in, short term, or partial-week service. Please call (703)633-7460 for more information or SACC Registration at (703)449-8989.