

# Mary B. Neal Elementary Parent Student Handbook 2023-2024

Home of the

Aim  
High



Blue Crabs of Character

Across the state of Maryland, Mary B. Neal Elementary School is the leader in academics and character education based on high expectations.

Students, families and staff actively demonstrate **Respect**, **Responsibility** and the **Right to Learn** in **ALL** aspects of their lives through community service and lifelong learning in a positive, safe and challenging environment.

Welcome to Mary B. Neal Elementary School. This handbook is designed to help you become familiar with Neal's activities and academic requirements.

Please keep this booklet and refer to it when you have questions. If you cannot find the answer you need, please feel free to call the office. Our website ([www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com)) is another great place to look for information.

**Neal Pledge**  
**As a Neal Blue Crab,**  
**I promise to show the 3Rs;**  
**Respect,**  
**Responsibility**  
**and the**  
**Right to Learn,**  
**in all that I do. I will strive for excellence in my**  
**attitude, my behavior and my character.**

## **Mary B. Neal Elementary School Facts**

**Mascot:** DJ, The Blue Crab

**Colors:** Blue, Red and Yellow

**Motto:** “Home of the Blue Crabs of Character”

**Cafeteria Name:** Blue Crab Café



Mary Burgess Neal

**Mary B. Neal:** Mary Burgess Neal was a former teacher, counselor, principal and school administrator who spent her 31-year career with Charles County Public Schools. She started her teaching career in 1944 at Bel Alton School, where she was later named as principal in 1949. She also served as principal of the Port Tobacco School and was appointed as Supervisor of Elementary Schools in 1961. She held that position until she retired in 1975. A graduate of Mensesa High School in Pennsylvania, she received her bachelor's degree in early childhood education from Bowie State College and her master's degree from New York State University. She was a member of the Eastern Star and Delta Kappa Gamma Society. Ms. Neal worked with Children's Aid Society in Waldorf and chaired numerous committees within her church. Ms. Neal was born Oct. 21, 1908 and passed away on May 2, 2005.



## ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at school is necessary for each child in order that he/she will receive the maximum benefit from the school program. Children should be in school at all times except in the case of illness, medical or dental appointments, family emergency or certain religious holidays. When a child is absent from school, he/she must bring a note written by a parent or guardian (or doctor for appointment), stating dates and reasons for the absence. These notes are to be given to the child's teacher.

School begins at 8:15 a.m. It is important that children arrive at school on time! Valuable time can be wasted when teachers have to repeat instructions for a latecomer. When a child arrives late and misses an important lesson, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to make it up. **If a child arrives at school after school begins, he/she should report to the office with his/her parent, where the attendance report will be changed from absent to tardy.**

If your child frequently develops a stomachache or is nauseated before going to school, and then becomes well later in the morning, you should be on alert. If however, your child is not feeling well and would be better off in bed, please do not send him/her to school.

The Charles County Board of Education adopted an attendance policy. The policy emphasizes consistent monitoring of absences, increased parent involvement in attendance matters and improved student attendance. The attendance policy is as follows:

1. Parent will be expected to give written excuses to the school for the purpose of coding absences.
2. The school will take specific steps to monitor absences. They are:
  - a. After **5 absences**, the school may notify the parents by letter stating the system-wide requirements.
  - b. After **10 absences**, the case will be referred to the School Principal who may contact the parent by phone, letter or meet with the parent and student to develop a plan to improve attendance.
  - c. After **15 absences**, the student will be referred to the school's pupil personnel worker, a letter will be sent and a plan will be put into place.
  - d. After **20 absences**, the student and parents will attend a hearing held at school.
  - e. After **21 absences** the student can be referred to the Superintendent for a truancy hearing.
3. Exceptions to this policy would be granted to students on home teaching, students enrolled in the Chronically Health Impaired Program (CHIP) or those who have a medical excuse written by a doctor.



### **BIRTHDAY POLICY**

In order to provide a safe, healthy and allergy-free classroom, **please don't bring in cupcakes, cookies, balloons, goodie bags or birthday invitations for birthday celebrations.**

Feel free to come have lunch with your child on their special day. Feel free to bring your child a special lunch and treat. Your child can choose up to three friends and sit with you at a designated table. We appreciate your cooperation with this matter.



### **BUS BEHAVIOR**

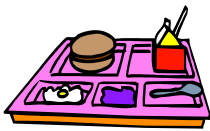
Riding the bus is a privilege. We expect children riding the bus to behave in a polite and dignified manner.

There are five basic rules that all children are expected to follow when riding the school bus:

1. Always show the 3 R's! (Respect, Responsibility and Right to Learn)
2. Remain seated and facing forward at all times.
3. Quiet talking is permissible.
4. Keep hands and feet to yourself (and inside the bus).
5. No eating, drinking or chewing gum on the bus.

The safety of our children is of primary importance to us. Misbehavior, fighting or disobeying the bus driver can endanger the lives and safety of all passengers on the bus.

When a child misbehaves on the bus, the driver will fill out a bus Discipline Report that is then given to the administrator. The administrator will have a conference with the child, contact the parent, review the bus safety rules and remind the child of the consequences of continued misbehavior.



## CAFETERIA PROCEDURES

Lunch is served daily in the school cafeteria. Students may bring their lunch from home. Students who bring lunch from home may buy milk for \$.50. They should not bring carbonated soft drinks in any containers as part of their lunch carried from home. If for some reason your child arrives at school without lunch, money to buy lunch, or money on account, they will be given an alternative lunch with a cheese sandwich as the entree. **It is highly recommended that you keep money on your child's account.** We believe that learning to remember one's lunch is part of developing responsibility and children should be encouraged to accept this as part of growing up.

**Parents must send a note to our cafeteria manager if a child is allowed to take money off their general account for drinks, ice cream, etc.** Federal funds are available for free or reduced-price lunch for children whose families qualify. Information and application forms are sent home on the first day of school. You can go to Charles County Public Schools website, [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com) to download a meal application.

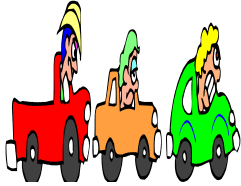
For the 2023-2024 school year, all students can eat breakfast for free. We were provided funds through the Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA) program, which provides state funds to allow participating schools to implement free breakfast for all students, regardless of meal benefit status, in the classroom. This model increases students' access to and participation in breakfast. Students are only able to get one free meal for breakfast. If an additional meal is wanted, the cost will be \$1.35.

### **SCHOOL MEAL PRICES**

BREAKFAST	~	\$0.00	REDUCED-PRICE BREAKFAST	~	\$.0
LUNCH	~	\$2.80	REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH	~	\$.0
MILK	~	\$ .70 (if purchased separately)			

Charles County Public Schools uses an online payment system, MyPaymentsPlus. MyPaymentPlus is a secure, Internet-Based system you can use to deposit money electronically to your child's cafeteria account. This system is available at [www.mypaymentsplus.com](http://www.mypaymentsplus.com) and is also linked on the home page of the Charles County Public Schools website, [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com), under Quick Links.

Parents who would like to use this service will have to register for an account, using their child's six-digit student identification number. A tutorial is available on the MyPaymentPlus website for parents to follow to set up their child's account. Families with more than one child enrolled in a Charles County Public School will only need to create one account.



## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

### **ARRIVAL:**

Students may enter the building starting at 7:55AM. Car riders need to be unloaded in the back of the building (gym/cafeteria side). **Car riders cannot be dropped off in front of the building during this time including the circle along the white fence.** It causes traffic issues along the circle. Bus riders and daycare vans will enter the front of the building. Please note, even if you are in the back parking lot by 8:15AM, students will receive a late pass. Students must be in their classroom by 8:15AM to be considered on time.

**Car riders** should exit curbside if at all possible. If they get out on the passenger side, they should walk in front of your car. Follow all staff directions to ensure safety of everyone.

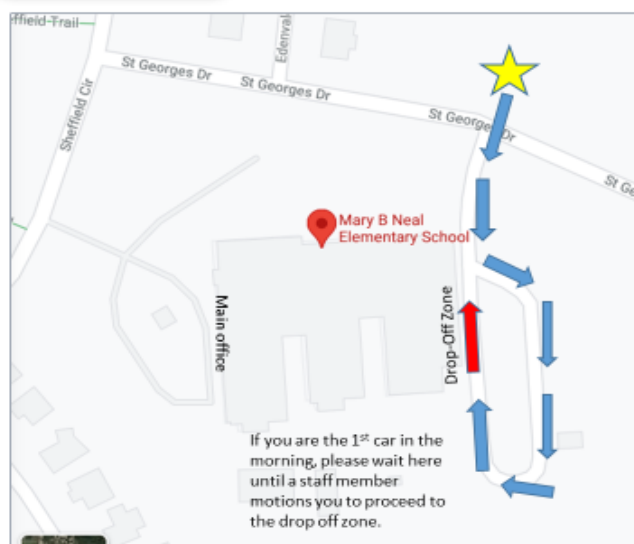
If the back doors have been closed, please proceed to the front of the building (where the flag poles are) to sign in your child. Please pull up to the curb, ring the doorbell, and show your **Government ID** to enter the building and sign in your child.

**Walkers/Bike Riders** enter and exit from the front of the building. They will use the sidewalk that is closest to the bike racks in the morning and afternoon.





## Arrival & Dismissal for Car Riders Mary B. Neal Elementary



### Arrival: 7:55 AM - Doors Open

*Enter the entrance off of St. George's Dr. and take the first left to go around the parking lot.*

If you are dropping off, please be sure your child **exits the car curbside**. If you have safety locks, we will open the door for your child; just let us know. Please don't wait until you are in the drop-off area (red arrow) to comb hair, sign papers, etc. This will avoid long lines. Please say good-bye in the car. Once the back doors have been closed, proceed to the front of the school to sign in your child.

### Dismissal: Car riders start @ 2:45PM

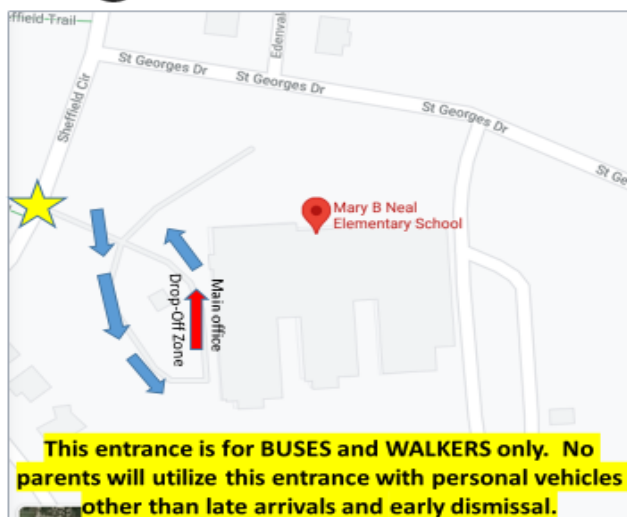
*Enter the entrance off of St. George's Dr. and take the first left to go around the parking lot.*

Pull your car up to the end of the sidewalk (if you are the first car) or the next car in line. Once your child loads, pull out and exit the first entrance. Please do not park in a handicap space to wait for your child.

Bus riders and Daycare Vans will enter the front of the building.



## Arrival & Dismissal for Bus Riders & Walkers— Mary B. Neal Elementary



### Arrival: 7:55AM - Buses & Walkers Arrive

*Arrivals will use the entrance off Sheffield Circle.*

Students will enter in the main hallway and proceed to their classroom.

### Dismissal: Starts @ 2:45PM

*Walkers and bus riders will exit using the Sheffield Circle.*

**Walkers** – Parents/guardians will walk and drop off students for arrival and pick up for dismissal. Please use the sidewalks at all times.

**Bus Riders** – Staff will assist in unloading and loading students with their appropriate bus. The student handbook has more detailed information regarding arrival and dismissal.

## DISMISSAL:

- ♦ Car riders are dismissed at 2:45PM and are picked up in the back of the building. Parents/Guardians need a car tag provided by the school. If a car tag is not present, a staff member will ask you to pull out of line and request to see a driver's license.



- ♦ Parents should **not** park their car and walk up. If your child is a car rider, they must leave school property in a car from the back of the building.
- ♦ There is NO parking on Sheffield Circle or St. Georges Drive in front of the white fences.
- ♦ Due to the size of the back parking lot we are able to hold several cars at a time. Cars will form a double line prior to dismissal.
- ♦ All car riders need to be picked up by **2:55PM** daily. After 3:00PM, you must come to the front office to sign them out.

### **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL ADDITIONAL THINGS TO KNOW:**

1. Car rider side, please do not go around a car still unloading - wait for the car or cars in front of you to move.
2. Cars are turning left and/or right coming into and out of the parking lot - please be careful and be patient.
3. Please make sure your child's teacher knows how your child will go home. Car riders dismiss at the back of the building and walkers (dismiss in the front of the building).
4. Transportation changes **MUST BE IN WRITING**. If you forget to write a note ahead of time, please email or fax changes to our front office secretaries by **2:00PM** and copy your child's teacher on the email.

Christie Carpenter: ccarpenter@ccboe.com and Yolanda Holmes: yholmes@ccboe.com

E-Fax Number: 301.944.0796

5. We **CANNOT** take transportation changes over the phone nor from a child.

### **WALKERS:**

1. Walkers are dismissed according to their grade level starting at 2:45PM.

### **OTHER:**

1. Three parking spaces are out front for 15-minute parking. This should help with morning office visits, late afternoon doctor appointments, etc.
2. Remind students to walk on the sidewalk.
3. Please obey the speed limit in the neighborhood **25 MPH**. On school property it is **5 MPH**.
4. Stop at **STOP** signs and allow students to use the crosswalks safely.

5. Please make sure to come to the front office before 2:15PM if you need your child for an early dismissal. **We will not make any dismissal changes after 2:15PM.** This is a safety measure consistent with all elementary schools in Charles County.



### **STUDENT DRESS CODE - BLUE CRAB PRIDE**

Suggestive, provocative or excessively tight clothing is not allowed to be worn to school or to school-sponsored activities. CCPS does not allow clothing to be worn on school property or to school-sponsored activities which displays messages or images that are offensive, vulgar, harassing, or otherwise inappropriate for the school setting. Clothing that is judged by the school administration to be disruptive to the orderly school process either by virtue of the design or in the manner in which it is worn is also forbidden.

Members of the CCPS Code of Student Conduct Committee, in collaboration with parents, staff, and community members, developed the following systemwide dress code, as amended and approved by the Board of Education. ***The responsibility for the dress and grooming of a student rests primarily with the student and their parent/guardian.***

#### **Allowable Dress & Grooming**

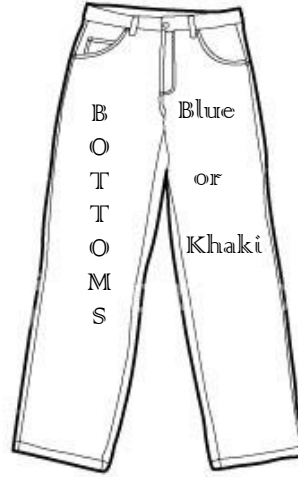
- Students must wear clothing including both a shirt with pants or skirt, or the equivalent and shoes.
- Shirts and dresses must have fabric in the front and on the sides.
- Clothing must cover undergarments.
- Fabric covering all private parts must not be see through.
- Hats and other headwear must allow the face to be visible and not interfere with the line of sight to any student or staff. Hoodies must allow the student face and ears to be visible to staff at all times.
- Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities including physical education, science labs, technical education, and other activities where unique hazards exist.
- Specialized courses may require specialized attire, such as sports uniforms or safety gear.

#### **Non-Allowable Dress & Grooming**

- Clothing may not depict, advertise, or advocate the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or other controlled substances.
- Clothing may not depict pornography, nudity, sexual acts or violence, or obscenities.
- Clothing may not use or depict hate speech targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other protected groups.
- Clothing may not include gang identifiers and must not threaten the health or safety of any other student or staff.
- If the student's attire or grooming threatens the health or safety of any other person, then discipline for dress or grooming violations should be consistent with discipline policies for similar violations.

***Note: Administrators have the flexibility to exercise their judgment to determine if a student's attire is considered disruptive, distracting or a safety hazard. Exceptions may be granted for medical or religious reasons.***

# Voluntary Uniforms



The uniform is voluntary, but students are encouraged to show their **BLUE CRAB PRIDE** often.

To show **BLUE CRAB PRIDE**, students should wear:

TOP COLORS: Red, Blue or Yellow (collared, turtleneck, scoop neck, t-shirt, etc.)

BOTTOM COLORS: Blue or Khaki (pants, shorts, jumper, skirt, etc.)

As we continue the **BLUE CRAB PRIDE** program, we are confident that it will continue to be a success. If you have any questions or suggestions, feel free to contact the school.



## CELL PHONES

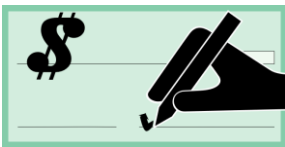
- Students may only bring their phone or device, with a written request from the parent or guardian for a specific (non-social) purpose, and upon receipt of written approval from the principal.
- Once approved, student must keep their phone or device powered completely off (not on vibrate or silent mode) and inside their book-bag, locker or cubby throughout the entirety of each school day, unless other storage arrangements are made with the teacher.
- No student should be in possession of a cell phone or personal electronic device during the school day.

Charles County Public Schools allows the possession and use of cell phones with limitations. It is our intent to ensure that this allowance does not disrupt the learning environment, after-school activities, or the safe transportation of students. Do not call your child and tell them to change their dismissal. We are responsible for their safety. Dismissal changes **must** be in writing. Students are permitted to use cell phones while attending (but not participating in) general public events that occur after-hours and are open to the community



## CHARACTER EDUCATION/PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports)

Neal is a National School of Character. We show the 3R's in all that we do. The 3R's are Respect, Responsibility and the Right to Learn. Not only are children expected to show the 3R's, staff and parents are as well. **Crab Claws:** Students are "caught" showing a character trait. The adult (staff and bus drivers) completes the crab claw. Monthly drawings will be held from our tower of crab claws.



## CHECKS

Checks written to the school should be made payable to Mary B. Neal Elementary. Please write your child's name in the memo line and the purpose. CCPS uses Envision Collections Agency for any returned checks. A fee of \$35 will apply.



### **CLASSROOM PARTIES**

As many as four parties may be held throughout the year. (Fall, Winter, Spring Break and End-of-the-Year.) Parties will not take up more than one hour of instructional time. Please inform the teacher if your child cannot participate because of religious reasons.



### **VISITORS TO THE BUILDING**

All visitors are asked to sign in at the main office and obtain a visitor's badge to ensure the safety and security of students and staff. All visitors **MUST PRESENT GOVERNMENT PHOTO ID** before entering the building.

Parents/guardians may either visit the classroom (including the playground) at the teacher's/school's invitation or request to make a formal observation of a classroom. Making an appointment with the school at least two (2) school days in advance of an observation is not only a courtesy and a requirement but enables the parent/guardian to schedule the observation for the maximum benefit. Teachers cannot stop teaching to confer with parents/guardians who stop by without an appointment. Parents/guardians may schedule up to two (2) classroom observations of up to forty-five (45) minutes in duration each grading period. Staff will accompany visitors to the classroom. Siblings should not attend. Teachers will be happy to discuss the observation at a mutually convenient time. Parents/guardians are welcome to visit the cafeteria and eat lunch with their child.

**In order to protect the privacy of other students, and in order to maintain a proper learning environment, parents/guardians may not use any audio or visual recording device at any time during the visitation and must turn off all cell phones and pagers.**

Principals retain the authority to deny access to the school for any individual who has been disruptive or may disrupt or disturb the learning environment or who lacks a valid or legal purpose for entering the school. Our shared commitment and cooperation is essential for the safety of our students and staff.

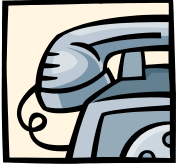


### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Report cards are posted on ParentVue and StudentVue at the end of each nine-week period. (Refer to the County calendar for interim and report card dates.) The parent or the teacher may use the report card to request a conference.

Teachers often telephone parents when there is a concern. If you, as a parent, have a concern, please contact your child's teacher.

If you wish a conference with a teacher or the administration, you may send an email through Synergy. Most likely, the teacher can see you before school in the morning or right after school. Please do not insist on seeing a teacher during school hours.



### **TELEPHONE USE**

Students are only permitted to make a phone call in an emergency. They will not be allowed to call for band instruments, homework, lunch, questions, permission slips, money, etc. Please check with your child prior to leaving the house to make sure your child has everything! Together let's create responsible students at Neal.



### **COUNSELING**

The goals of the School Counselors are to facilitate the personal and academic growth of students, promote the effective development of students' interpersonal skills and to improve understanding and application of the decision-making process. These goals are primarily met through individual, group and classroom lessons, in addition to parent and teacher conferences.



### **DISCIPLINE**

A child must feel safe and secure in his/her environment in order for optimum learning to occur. The environment must also be conducive to learning. No child will be allowed to deprive other children of learning, nor will any child serve as a threat to his/her fellow students. All children need to know the limit in which they must exist.

At times, a student may need to be removed from the classroom. Various consequences may result from the removal of class but not limited to the following reasons:

**TIME OUT** - The child does their work in another teacher's classroom or administrator's office for a certain amount of time until they are ready to return to class. The child may just need a walk and redirection for success in class.

**IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION** - The child spends anywhere from a few hours to all day out of the classroom. They do their class work while there. They eat their lunch there and are not allowed to go to recess or specials. Parents are informed.

**SUSPENSION** - If a child is suspended, they will stay home the number of days suspended. Prior to returning to school, the child, the parent(s), and the administration will have a conference. The parent is informed by writing and phone.



## DRILLS FOR SAFETY

During the school year we practice several drills in the event of an emergency for student and staff safety. We do fire drills, shelter drills, lockdown drills and secure drills.

**Fire drills** are done at least once a month. Students practice leaving the building when the fire alarm sounds.

**Shelter drills** are practiced at least four times a year. Students are trained how to protect themselves in the event of high winds. Any time we're under a tornado warning, we have students in the high wind position.

**Lockdown drills** are done at least four times a year. Students are trained what to do in the event of a Lockdown Emergency. Students and staff are kept in their secured classroom until the building is deemed safe. No visitors or parents are allowed in the building if they arrive during the drill. Likewise, if a parent or visitor is in the building during the drill, they will remain in a secure area and not permitted to leave until the drill is completed.

**Secure drills** are done at least four times a year. Students practice entering the building should an emergency occur outside. Instruction will continue as usual inside the building.



## EARLY DEPARTURE

Dismissal of children during the school day is discouraged because it creates some of the same problems as tardiness - missing out on directions or important parts of a lesson. Occasions do arise, however, when it is necessary for parents to pick up children early - medical, dental appointments, etc. In such cases, the child should bring a note of explanation to his/her teacher when he/she arrives at school in the morning.

Students will be called to the office once the parent arrives. When the parent or guardian comes to pick up the child, he/she must come to the school office and sign the child out. ***If for some reason you must send someone else to pick up your child, please email Christie Carpenter ([ccarpenter@ccboe.com](mailto:ccarpenter@ccboe.com)) or Yolanda Holmes ([yholmes@ccboe.com](mailto:yholmes@ccboe.com)) giving the school permission to release your child to that person even if they are listed as an emergency contact.*** That person **MUST** have a picture ID. **There will no early departures after 2:15PM.** This is a safety measure.





### SCHOOL SCHEDULED EARLY DISMISSAL

Please be sure to check the Charles County Public Schools Parent Handbook/Calendar as well as the Mary B. Neal Master Calendar for scheduled **Two Hour** Early Dismissal Days.



### EMERGENCY INFORMATION

During the first few days of school, each child will bring home an emergency card to be verified by the parent. This card contains up-to-date information such as address of parents, home and work phone numbers and the names of who to call in the case of an emergency. **It is important that this information be kept current.** Please verify the card and send it to school right away. If your address, phone number or emergency numbers change at any time during the school year, **please notify us of the changes.**

Remember that if your child becomes ill or has an accident, the emergency card and Synergy (database) are our best way to contact you!

If there is a custody situation between parents, please alert the school. If a court order is not on file in the child's permanent record, either parent has the right to pick up the child.



### FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an important part of the school program and serve as an extension of the curriculum. They are planned in conjunction with topics that are being studied in the classroom and can serve as an introductory-type activity, as a resource during a unit of study, or sometimes as a culminating activity. Each grade level will have a maximum of three paid field trips a year. Second grade will go to the One Room School House. Fifth grade will go to Nanjemoy Creek and swimming as part of the fifth-grade curriculum. Most grade levels will go to the Science Center.

Parents should reinforce Neal's expectations for student's behavior during the field trip and on the bus.

In order to go on a scheduled field trip, the student **MUST** bring a permission slip signed by a parent or legal guardian. In addition, there is usually a charge for the bus and sometimes an admission fee. Before each field trip, teachers will send home a letter giving details as to what each child needs to bring as well as any special information about the trip. Refunds are NOT allowed since prices are determined based on head count prior to the trip.

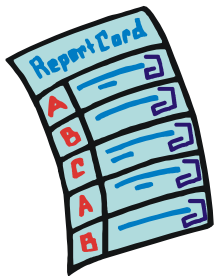
If for some reason a student does not go on a class field trip, he/she should still come to school. Appropriate assignments and a supervised place to work will be provided.

Interested parents are sometimes needed to assist the classroom teachers on field trips, depending on the number of other adult staff members available to chaperone. Due to limited space on the buses and limited group size at some museums, it is not always possible to include all parents who wish to participate. Please keep in mind that only children who are students of Neal (in that particular grade level) will be permitted to go on the trips. ALL chaperones must complete a background check and sign a volunteer/chaperone agreement if chosen by the teacher. If you are interested in chaperoning, please let the teacher know so a volunteer link can be emailed to you to complete a background check. This needs to be completed each school year.



### **FUNDRAISING**

The principal will sponsor one fundraiser this year. It will be held in January and February. Parents can donate money in lieu of participating in the fundraiser.



### **GRADING POLICY**

Students in Kindergarten - Grade 2 do not receive letter grades. Evaluation is based on the performances of each student in meeting appropriate instructional objectives. Their report card consists of Consistently Demonstrating, Developing, and Needs Improvement. Students in grades three through five receive grades A-B-C-D-F. They receive a 3, 2 or 1 in the area of Personal Responsibility.



### **HEALTH ROOM AND MEDICATION PROCEDURES**

Basic first aid will be administered when a child is injured in school. If the injury is serious or questionable, we try to contact the parent or guardian at home or work. The emergency contacts are called in the event the parents or guardians cannot be reached.

The same procedures are used if a child becomes ill during school hours. If you are not able to leave your job to pick up a sick child, please make arrangements for a relative, neighbor or sitter to come for him/her in a timely manner.

It is imperative that the school and the nurse have current home, work and emergency phone numbers. Please be sure to report any changes in the numbers immediately! If you have a non-published number, please indicate this and privacy will be maintained.

Medications should be given at home whenever possible. If it is absolutely necessary that a child take medication during the school day, the doctor and parent/guardian must complete a physician's order form. This form can be picked up in the office. All medication will be kept in the nurse's office under lock and key. The child will report there to take the medication. Children shall under no circumstances have any form of medication in their possession. No "over the counter" medicines may be brought to school. Children do not realize the hazards of sharing medications with other children. Serious consequences may result, such as an allergic or toxic reaction. This policy is to protect your child. Charles County Public Schools has assigned a nurse to our school. On occasions when he/she is not present, the office staff and a substitute nurse are available to handle student medical needs.

### **TO SEND OR NOT TO SEND**

**How does a parent decide when to send a child to school or not?**

- Maryland State Law is very specific - It requires parent(s) to send a child to school every day. The daily decision should always be weighed in favor of sending your child to school. In other words, unless there is a serious reason - **SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL!**

**But suppose my child complains of not feeling well....what then?**

- Take your child's temperature. If their temperature is 100° F or higher, then they should remain at home in bed for the day.

**Suppose my child vomited in the middle of the night?**

- If your child vomited during the night or before school, then they should remain at home in bed. Do not give any solid foods, but when the vomiting has slowed, give clear liquids for the rest of the day, so that your child will not become dehydrated. If there is no fever and your child is feeling better (no vomiting), send them to school the next day. If vomiting lasts longer than a few hours or you have any questions, call your child's doctor.

**Suppose my child has asthma and has an attack during the night or before school? Should they be sent to school?**

- Make sure your child has received a treatment and is no longer wheezing - if your child has medication at school, then notify the nurse and make sure that there are current doctor's orders and medication for your child before sending them to school.

### **What if my child has a cold or sore throat?**

- Take your child's temperature - if they have a temperature of 100° F, they should remain at home in bed - if the sore throat lasts for more than 3 days, your child will need to see the doctor for a throat culture.

### **Sometimes we get up late. Should I send my child then?**

- **YES - BEING LATE IS BETTER THAN BEING ABSENT.**

### **Some ideas that may help to ensure that your child is on time.**

- Make sure your child has a regular bedtime that is early enough so that your child gets at least 7 hours of sleep.
- Have the next day's clothes picked out the night before.
- Put the cereal bowls on the table the night before.
- Give your child an alarm clock. Help your child decide how much time they need to get ready in the morning. Help set the alarm clock.

### **Sometimes my child says they are sick. I let them stay home from school, but then they feel better and wants to play. What should I do?**

- If you, as a parent, have decided that your child is too sick to be in school - your child should be in bed. If your child feels well enough to play - bring them to school.

When children are in school, they learn IMPORTANT SKILLS needed to SUCCEED in LIFE.



## **HOMEWORK**

The purpose of homework is to help students improve their skills, become independent workers, learn to use books and other resources, increase their knowledge, and express thoughts creatively.

Parents often ask how they can best help their child with homework. Here are some suggestions that might provide some guidance.

- Provide a quiet, well-lighted place for him/her to work. Be sure there are ample supplies of paper, pencils, erasers, etc.
- Guide your child so that the assignment is completed before that favorite TV show or before bedtime.
- Show an interest in your child's homework, but make sure he or she does the actual assignment.
- Let your child know that homework is important and that it is imperative that it gets done. Homework is not optional. It is an assignment and should take priority over other activities.
- Let the teacher know if the homework assignments are consistently requiring more time than the guidelines (see below) suggest or if you have any other concerns about homework in general.
- If your child (in grades 1-5) consistently says that he/she has no homework, then you should become suspicious. A note or a phone call to the teacher should clarify this.
- Board of Education Homework policy states that:
  - Kindergarten is optional
  - Grades 1-5 ten minutes in Grade 1 and progressing up to an hour in Grade 5.
  - How Often? - Everyday (Monday-Thursday)
  - Grades 1-5 - There should be no assignments over the holidays.

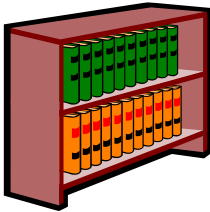


If your child is absent, homework does NOT need to be made up unless requested by the parent.

### INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, the following information might be helpful:

- CCPS (Charles County Public Schools) Hotline Numbers  
301.934.7410 or 301.932.6656
- Also visit [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com) and sign up for CNS (Citizens Notification Service)
- During inclement weather, there is always the possibility that school may close early. In the event that you are to be away from home at such times, your child should know where he/she is to go. It is advisable for all parents to develop a plan so that their children know what to do when an emergency situation arises.



### LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

The Library/Media Center serves the needs of all students, staff and parents. Through small and large group instruction our students are taught library information skills. Our media center is equipped with the latest computer technology and print and non-print materials. Neal students have access to the Internet, web page publishing, multimedia projects with sound, graphics, animation and video, digital camera and scanner, CD-writer and video capture and editing capabilities.



### LOST AND FOUND

The Lost and Found Box is situated outside the cafeteria. It is a large wooden chest. All lost coats, hats, gloves, sweaters, etc. will be placed in one box. If your child is missing an article of clothing, we suggest you encourage him/her to check the Lost and Found Box! **It is also a good idea to mark your child's belongings.** Unclaimed items will be displayed from time to time. Items remaining unclaimed by Winter Break and at the end of the school year will be donated to a Charity.



### PARENT GROUPS

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meets once a month to give input on school decisions and programs. Any parent is welcome to attend. There is a membership fee of \$5.00 per family which will entitle you to vote.

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**



Volunteers are among the most valuable people in our school. When parents volunteer, it enables our teachers to concentrate on their primary objective, teaching our children. There are jobs for everyone who is interested. All Volunteers/Chaperones are required to have a background check and be approved. Please let your teacher know if you are interested so a volunteer link can be emailed to you to complete the background check.



## **POSTAL SYSTEM**

Students, staff and families can write letters and mail them through our in-house postal system. Addresses are available through the child's teacher.



## **RECESS**

Recess procedures are at the discretion of the classroom teacher. During inclement weather or extreme cold, children will remain indoors. If it is necessary for your child to remain inside, a doctor's note is needed.



## **REPORT CARDS**

Pre-K receives 2 written report cards a year and one conference with the teacher. Grades K through 5 receive 4 written report cards a year. Report cards detail a child's school progress. The dates report cards are issued are noted on the school calendar and will be posted on ParentVue and StudentVue. No hard copies will be sent home. For further information, please contact your child's teacher.

## **RETENTION**

Students may be retained once during their elementary years. If retention is necessary, kindergarten or first grade is the preferred grade to retain a student. Parents will be included in this process.



## SCHOOL HOURS

School hours are from 8:15 am to 2:45 pm. On early dismissal days, school hours are 8:15 am to 12:45pm. Staff supervision of students is from 7:55AM-2:45PM.

Office Hours are from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm.



## School Pictures

A professional photographer will take individual pictures in the fall. If a child is absent or if the parent is not satisfied with the developed pictures, there will be a picture make-up day. These pictures are used in the Neal Yearbook published at the end of the year. Yearbook sales usually start in the Spring. Class and personality pictures may be taken in the spring.

There are no makeup dates for class pictures in the Spring.



## School Song

(Show crab sign with hands)  
We're Neal Blue Crabs of Character  
(Point to brain)  
We know just what to do,  
(Do 'come on down' motion with hand)  
And if you come to Mary B. Neal  
(Show 3 fingers)  
3 R's we'll show to you!

(Show one finger, preferably your index finger)  
Oh, we are all respectful,  
(Show two fingers)  
We have the right to learn,  
(Show three fingers)  
And when we are responsible,  
(Pat yourself on the back)  
Pride in ourselves we earn!

(March)  
We come to school to learn and grow,  
(Hands on hips)  
We'll prove to you all that we know,  
(Reach toward sky)  
We're always reaching for success,  
(Fist pump toward sky or cha-ching)  
As Neal Blue Crabs we are the best!



**Positive Referrals:** Any student can earn a positive referral for Outstanding Academic Achievement or Character Choices. It is also for great improvement and effort. Any staff member can issue one.

**Awards Program:** Principal's Hall of Fame is for students in grades 3, 4 and 5. If the child receives an "A" in all subjects listed on the report card, they earn the Principal's Hall of Fame incentive. A student can earn Honor Roll by receiving an A or B in all subjects listed on the report card. Personal Responsibility is for students in grades 1 thru 5. The student must earn all "3's" or consistently demonstrating (grades 1 and 2) on the Learner Characteristic Section of the report card. Attendance: Students in grades PreK - 5 who only miss 1 or less days of school and have no more than 3 tardies are eligible for the quarterly attendance certificate. Blue Crab Spirit Award is awarded by the teachers to a student who has shown significant growth or who is an extraordinary scholar or role model.

**Scientist of the Quarter:** Our science teachers select one child from each class as their Scientist of the Quarter.

**Blue Crab Spirit Award:** It is awarded by the teachers to a student who has shown significant growth or who is an extraordinary scholar or role model.



### **Special Activities and Programs (Tentative)**

**Destination Imagination** - DI is an organization that sponsors a set of yearly problems. Using creative problem solving, groups of students in grades K through grade 5 meet after school in groups of 5-7 students with an adult leader. The students work together to develop a solution to the problem they have selected and present their solution at the Charles County DI Competition held in the spring. Parents are trained to be coaches for their children.

**Field Day** - Field Day is an activity designed for students to enjoy a variety of sports and games appropriate for their developmental level. It is an opportunity for parents to help in a non-academic setting.

**Just Say No** - Just Say No is an after-school activity.

**Math Teams** - Neal's Math Teams are open to students in grades 4 and 5. Because of the competitive nature of the math teams, participation is based on prior test scores and teacher recommendations. Students are selected to represent Neal at the County Math Competition held annually in the spring. Neal sponsors a third-grade team as well.

**MESA** - Maryland MESA is a structured, K-12, precollege program designed to prepare students for academic and professional careers in mathematics, engineering, science, and technology. The program's goals are to 1) increase the number of engineers, scientists, mathematicians, and related professionals at technical and management levels, and 2) serve as a driving force in encouraging and assisting minorities and females in achieving success in these fields. Neal students in grades 3 - 5 may participate in this after school program. A competition between elementary schools in Charles County is held during the school day in March. Please look for the permission slip that will be sent home this fall.

**Morning Announcements and Mary B. Neal News (MBNNEWS)** - Students are the Morning Anchors each day. Our Media Specialist is our sponsor.

**PRAISE Night** - Public Recognition Achievement in Student Excellence is held at least once a year. Each teacher creates a display of student work for families to come view. Families can view the classrooms from 3:00 - 7:00 p.m.

**PTO** - This is a group of parents (anyone is welcome) that will meet each month with the administration to contribute suggestions, share with each other, etc. and to help make decisions that affect what is best for all students at Mary B. Neal. Dates are in the school calendar.

**Science Fair** - The Neal Science Fair is an event held annually to all students from Pre-Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade. This is a wonderful opportunity for students and their families to explore scientific concepts. Some winners of the Neal Science Fair go on to compete against other elementary students at the Charles County Science Fair. For further information, please contact your child's homeroom teacher or one of our science teachers.

**Student Ambassadors** - Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 are selected to be an ambassador. They greet visitors and help with special days. Students must show the 3R's to be selected.

**Yearbook** - Neal Elementary School develops an all-color yearbook. Individual, as well as random pictures are included. This is an excellent tool for recapturing your child's early school years at a minimal cost. This is not a fundraiser.



### **TEXTBOOKS/LIBRARY BOOKS/TECHNOLOGY**

Textbooks, library books, computers and other school materials are extremely expensive, and we have limited funds with which to replace them. If a child loses a textbook or damages a computer, he/she will be required to pay the cost of its replacement. Damage to a book could result in a fine.



## **NEAL CRAB CLUBS**

Neal Crab Clubs are thirty-minute clubs for students in grades 3 - 5. Classroom teachers, instructional assistants, special area teachers, and other staff, sponsor over 25 clubs. Some include checkers, chess, sign language, cooking, homework help, fast math, cheerleading and many more.

*The Charles County public school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices. For inquiries, please contact Kathy Kiessling, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (students) or Nikial M. Majors, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (employees/adults), at Charles County Public Schools, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, MD 20646; 301-932-6610/301-870-3814. For special accommodations call 301-934-7230 or TDD 1-800-735-2258 two weeks prior to the event. CCPS provides nondiscriminatory equal access to school facilities in accordance with its Use of Facilities rules to designated youth groups (including, but not limited to, the Boy Scouts).*

*Charles County Public Schools is committed to providing all individuals an educational environment that is free from sexual discrimination. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 states that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of gender, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity that receives federal financial assistance. Sexual discrimination includes sexual harassment, sexual assault and sexual violence and is characterized as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with an individual's ability to learn, study, work, achieve or participate in school activities. If any individual wishes to file a complaint of sexual discrimination, they should contact the school's Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Sonia Matthew, Assistant Principal at 301.753.2086, or speak to any school-based administrator. All complaints may be resolved either informally or through a formal investigation process set out in Superintendent's Rule 5116, found here: [Title IX - Charles County Public Schools \(ccboe.com\)](https://www.ccboe.com/TitleIX). The Rule also outlines supportive measures available to the parties through the Title IX Coordinator or school-based administrator, including counseling, mental health services referral, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring, and other similar measures determined by school officials to be legally permissible and necessary to protect the safety or educational or employment activities of a party.*