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# **Parent-Student Handbook**



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## 2023-2024 WELCOME LETTER

Dear Parents and Students,

On behalf of the faculty and staff of Heritage Elementary School, we would like to say welcome to our new families and to those who are returning. We hope you had a fine summer vacation and are looking forward with enthusiasm to the new school year. It is our goal that your four years with us will be educationally profitable to you. We anticipate your involvement and cooperation in making this year successful.

This handbook has been prepared to help answer many questions students and parents have concerning the activities, procedures, and guidelines for the successful daily operation of Heritage Elementary School. Students will be expected to maintain regular attendance, be active participants in their learning, and behave in a way that leads to a respectful and kind environment for all. Heritage Elementary School's staff looks forward to supporting students in these expectations to promote a positive school year.

Everyone at Heritage Elementary School believes that working together produces the best results for our students. We would like to encourage parents, teachers, support personnel, students, and the community to work together to ensure our students become high achieving, respectful, and contributing members of our school and community. Parent involvement is critical to student success, and we look forward to partnering with each of you.

Our hope is that you will feel Heritage Elementary School is a wonderful place to be every day. It is our desire to prepare students for success in school and in life. We hope this year will be your most successful year ever.

In Patriot Love and Pride,

*Cecilia Earheart*

Principal

*Amy Shapton*

Assistant Principal

**Vision:** Achieving Excellence Together

**Mission:** Our mission at Heritage Elementary School is to:

- Help students grow as individuals.
- Engage students in problem solving.
- Strive for academic excellence.

### **School Hours**

School begins at 7:15 and dismisses at 2:15

- 6:45 Doors open for student arrival
- 7:15 Tardy bell rings

- All students **MUST** be in their classrooms by this time.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** If there is not a faculty/staff member in the drop off area at the back of the school, the doors will be locked, and you **MUST** bring your child to the front office to obtain a tardy slip.

Afternoon dismissal will be as follows:

- Bus riders are dismissed to the buses on the north side (front) of the building.
- Daycare students are dismissed to the north side (front) of the building.
- Car riders will be dismissed from classrooms to the back of the building.

**\*\*Please do not park and come into the building to pick up your child at dismissal unless it is an emergency as this interferes with dismissing students.\*\***

### **Car Rider (Drop-off and Pickup)**

All car riders will be dropped off or picked up in the car rider line on the playground side of the building. Traffic will be one way. Enter off Highway 31 by Domino's Pizza and exit onto West Drive.

**\*\*PLEASE DO NOT GET OUT OF YOUR VEHICLE DURING STUDENT DROP-OFF OR PICKUP!**

- Morning car rider line is single file behind the school. Please pull your vehicle all the way to the end of the covered sidewalk. Please pull forward towards the lowest numbered station. This allows for a quicker drop-off time. Students will then proceed to their designated morning location. **DO NOT** drop students in the back of the building if a faculty/staff member is not present! You **MUST** bring your child to the front office and sign them in if tardy.
- Afternoon pick up will be conducted in the rear of the building. Cars should not start lining up until after 1:45 p.m. behind the school building due to students being out at recess. Three lines should be formed. Students will be assigned a number that should be displayed on the passenger side visor. Simultaneously, student numbers will be displayed in classrooms. Students will then proceed outside to meet the car. When your student is safely in the car, please flip the visor up to signal that the vehicle is ready to go. All cars will be dismissed by a faculty member. **NOTE:** If you lose your car tag, please contact your child's teacher for a replacement.

### **Bus Riders**

The school bus is an extension of the school; therefore, students shall conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with the established standards for safety and classroom behavior. Please see bus brochure for a list of bus rules.

Students are under the supervision and authority of the bus driver while on the bus, and all reasonable directions shall be followed.

The principal/designee of the student transported shall be informed by the bus driver of any serious discipline problem, and may be called upon to assist, if necessary. A student may be denied the privilege of riding the bus if the principal/designee determines that the behavior causes disruption on the bus, or if he/she disobeys state or local rules pertaining to transportation.

Any student that gets off the bus at any point between the pickup point and the school must present the bus driver with a note or authorization from the parent and signed by the principal/designee of the school that the student attends.

Any student wishing to ride the bus other than to his/her designated bus stop must have written permission from the parent and/or approval of the principal.

Should you have a need to speak with someone at the bus transportation office, you may do so by calling 615-384-4555.

### **Changes in Transportation**

At the beginning of the school year, you will need to inform your child's teacher as to how he/she will be transported home from school daily. The teacher will continue sending your student home in the same manner each day. If you need to make a change in his/her regular routine, you **MUST** send a signed note to your child's teacher instructing them otherwise. Without a note, your child's teacher is required to follow their regular procedure. **WE WILL NOT ACCEPT PHONE CALLS TO CHANGE TRANSPORTATION!! Emails and/or faxes for transportation notes will only be accepted in an EMERGENCY SITUATION due to safety protocols.** Also, if you must change your student's mode of transportation, please do so before 1:45 p.m. If you need to pick your student up early, please do so **BEFORE 1:45 p.m.** This will help to ensure that the buses have access to the bus loading area.

When a student is going home with another student, or a student is coming home with your child, a note must be provided by **BOTH** students' parents. These notes must be signed by the administration/designee. The signed notes must be provided to the staff in the car rider pick-up area or the bus driver by each student.

### **Tardies/Early Dismissals**

If a student arrives at school after the 7:15 bell rings, they will be required to obtain a tardy slip to be admitted to class. **If a faculty/staff member is not present during morning drop-off, the doors have been locked and you MUST bring your child to the front office to be signed in.**

If you need to pick your child up early, please do so BEFORE 1:45 p.m. This will help to ensure that the buses have access to the bus loading area.

Any student signed out before dismissal must bring a physician's note to school the following day to be excused. All dismissals are entered as unexcused until this is obtained.

When a student accumulates 8 unexcused tardies/early dismissals combined, it will convert to 1 unexcused absence. (Per Robertson County Handbook). **Please note:** tardies and early dismissals also count towards perfect attendance at the end of the year.

### **Emergency Information**

Please notify the school immediately if there is a change in your address, telephone number, person to contact in an emergency, or person(s) allowed to pick up your child. Also, if you have any type of court or custody papers that relate to your child, please make sure that we have the most recent documents.

### **Emergency School Closings**

The School Board authorizes the Director of Schools to close schools in the event of hazardous weather or any other emergency that presents a threat to the safety of our students, staff members, or school property.

You will receive a form from your child's teacher requesting transportation information for Emergency School Closings. When you receive this form from the school, we ask that you complete the information regarding how your child should go home and return it to their teacher as soon as possible. It is important that you list only one method of transportation for your child and that you remember your selection.

As soon as the decision to close schools is made, the Director of Schools will notify each school so they can prepare for the emergency dismissal. They will also notify the local public media to request an announcement be made, and the School Reach will be activated. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL**, as we will need to keep our phone lines open for further instruction and emergency purposes. Announcements of closings are broadcast via radio, television, and may also be obtained from local television station websites.

### **Parking**

Parking in the front of the building is limited. There are only a few parking spaces located along the front of the building. All others are in the back lot adjacent to the playground. Please do not park in the Fire Lane or Disabled Parking spaces (unless proper tag is displayed in your vehicle).

### **Visitors**

Any parent/visitor entering the building is required to sign in using the School Check-in computer and obtain a visitor's badge/lanyard. The lanyard should always be worn around the neck. A valid driver's license is **required** for entrance to the building. Please return the lanyard before you exit the building.

During the school day, parents/visitors are not allowed to go to classrooms unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher and office. **Visitors will not be allowed to eat in the cafeteria with students due to the lack of adequate space. The opportunity to eat with your student will be provided during our holiday breakfast celebration.** If you have items for a student, please leave them in the front office, and we will see that they are delivered.

**NO photos may be taken by parents/visitors at any time during school activities. This includes, but is not limited to, cafeteria, field day, classroom activities, and field trips.**

### **Cafeteria**

Each student is assigned an account number for the cafeteria and will be issued a lunch card. ALL STUDENTS WILL RECEIVE FREE BREAKFAST AND LUNCH for the 2023-2024 school year. If you need to contact the school cafeteria, please call 615-672-4684.

**Please do not bring food from outside restaurants for breakfast or lunch.** These items are not allowed in the cafeteria. If they are brought into the cafeteria, they will be thrown away. When bringing lunches from home, **do not send carbonated drinks.**

### **Student Birthday Celebrations**

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday at school, the BEST option is to send classroom supplies for distribution to all classmates such as pencils, erasers, etc., or donate a book to the classroom or school library in honor of your child. **NO food items will be allowed for birthday celebrations due to food allergies and health related issues.**

### **Snack**

Classroom teachers will determine appropriate times for snack breaks. Please send only healthy snacks for your child. Examples of healthy snacks may include fruit, sliced vegetables, granola bars, cereal bars, popcorn (in a Ziploc bag), cheese and crackers, etc. Please do not send anything that will require an eating utensil. You may send bottled water or water in a thermos-type bottle, but **please do not send flavored water or flavor pouches**. Water should be the only drink sent for snack time. If you have additional questions, please contact your child's teacher.

Chewing gum is NOT allowed in the school building!

### **Attendance Policy** (See Robertson County Policy for more information.)

Absences are classified as either excused, unexcused, or suspended by the principal or his/her designee. *Excused* absences include but are not limited to illness of student (after 3 consecutive days or repeated absences, a note from a physician may be required), illness of a family member which requires the student's help at home, death of a family member, medical appointments which cannot be scheduled outside school time, religious holidays, or circumstances which, in the judgment of the principal, create emergencies over which the student has no control. Students participating in school-sponsored activities, whether on or off campus, shall not be counted absent.

Elementary age students will be permitted up to 5 days each semester of excused absences with a parent note. After the 5 days, a doctor's note will be required for each absence, or the absence will be unexcused.

All missed class work or tests may be made up when the excused absence is verified by a note or contact with the parent and the student makes the request immediately upon returning to school. Students who have received excused absences will have time equal to the number of days missed plus one day to make up any assignments.

### **Excessive Absences**

When a student accumulates 10 excused absences, they will receive notification that a doctor's note will be required to excuse any further absences. When a student accumulates five unexcused attendance events, the student's records are reviewed. If a problem is noted, the Attendance Committee will meet with the parent to develop a plan of correction.

When a student accumulates eight unexcused attendance events, the student's records will be reviewed by the Truancy/Grade Review Advisory Board consisting of a school supervisor, a juvenile court representative, and any other relevant person. Should this review indicate a problem, a truancy complaint will be filed against the student, requiring the student and parent appear before the Board to develop a plan of correction.

### **Health/School Nurse**

If your child has an accident or becomes ill during the school day, the teacher may send them to the clinic to see the nurse. The school nurse will evaluate his/her condition and contact the person listed on the emergency contact list, if necessary. **It is particularly important that you keep the office updated of any changes to your contact information on the emergency section in PowerSchool.**

No school official/teacher will routinely dispense medication to students, except in the unique situations in which a child's health is dependent upon medical aid. If under the exceptional circumstances, a child is required to take oral medication during school hours and the parent cannot be present, only the principal/designee will administer the medication in compliance with the following regulations:

All medications must be:

- Stored in a locked box in a secure area.
- Brought to school by a responsible adult in a properly labeled pharmacy container (prescription), or unopened bottle (over the counter). **\*\*\*An appointment must be made with the school nurse to drop off medication.\*\*\***
- Accompanied by written permission from the parent/guardian.

Over-the-Counter medications:

- Must be brought to school in a new, unopened container and labeled with the student's name and reason medication is needed.
- Shall be administered according to the manufacturer's recommendation.
- Aspirin/aspirin containing products, herbals, and vitamins will NOT be administered without a physician's orders.

\*\*If you have any questions, please call the school nurse at 615-672-4595.

### **Behavior/Discipline Policy**

Please review Robertson County Board of Education discipline policy in the handbook. Classroom procedures will be sent home by your child's teacher.

The Heritage Elementary school-wide behavior plan is based on the 8 Keys of Excellence character education program. The school-wide plan focuses on teaching, modeling, and practicing positive behavior throughout the school. All staff members will communicate with students using the language of the 8 keys and rewards and consequences will also be connected to the keys. We want to ensure that we recognize and reinforce students' positive choices. We also want to make sure that we address students' negative choices in a responsive, corrective, and progressive manner, rather than simply punitive.

### **8 Keys of Excellence**

- Integrity – Match behavior with values
- Failure Leads to Success – Learn from mistakes
- Speak with good purpose – Speak honestly and kindly
- This is it!- Make the most of every moment
- Commitment – Take responsibility for actions
- Flexibility – Be willing to do things differently
- Balance – Live your best life

**The following behaviors are considered severe and will be addressed by administration:** weapons, fighting or aggressive physical contact, aggressive language, threats, bullying, harassment of students or teachers, continuance of disobeying classroom and school rules, vandalism, and social media actions that impede the school learning environment.

Consequences for misbehavior referred to the office will depend on the severity of the infraction and the pattern of behavior and may include the following:

- Conference with student
- Parent phone call
- Note home to parents (sign and return)
- Isolated lunch
- Loss of free time
- In-School Suspension
- Parent Conference
- Out of School Suspension
- Reset Room\*

### \*Reset Room

Restorative ISS (R-ISS), or as we like to call it, the Reset Room, will be used at Heritage Elementary School to help reteach appropriate school behaviors as needed. This room is a location where students can go to regulate behaviors, calm themselves if necessary, and return to class as quickly as possible. Students can be assigned to this room by administration or their teacher. Students can also request to go to this room if they feel a break is needed. Our goal is for students to learn to utilize this room to manage their own behaviors instead of behaviors getting to the point where an office/discipline referral is needed.

### Class Dojo

At HES, all classrooms use the ClassDojo App as part of their behavior management system and to communicate daily behaviors with parents. This app allows you to easily stay aware of your child's behavior and easily communicate with teachers at Heritage Elementary. Please use the information provided by your child's teacher to sign-up and stay connected with your child's classroom! Behavior percentages are reviewed regularly, and students with a 90% or higher are rewarded with a grade level incentive. Students who do not meet the percentage requirements will work on learning activities.

**NOTE: Please DO NOT use ClassDojo to communicate with school administration! Please contact the school via phone or e-mail one of the administrators with your questions and/or concerns.**

### Dress Code

Students shall dress and groom in a clean, neat, and modest manner so as not to distract or interfere with the operation of the school.

Heritage Elementary School students must adhere to the following dress code:

- No head coverings, except for religious head coverings and coverings for medical reasons
- No bare midriffs, revealing necklines
- No shorts, skirts, or jeans with holes more than three and one-half (3.5) inches above the fold of the knee
- No tube, tank, see through tops
- No sagging pants
- No attire promoting alcohol, tobacco products, or drugs
- No dusters or trench coats
- No clothing containing advertising for objectionable causes or offensive language
- No gang related clothing
- No outer clothing which resembles lounge wear, pajamas, or underwear
- No spikes, chains, piercings, or other items that cause a safety concern
- Shoes/sandals must be worn at all times (tied/fastened)

### Field Trips

All field trips are aligned with curriculum standards. Each grade may take one field trip per year, during the fall semester. Students must ride the bus to the field trip destination. Parents/chaperones may follow the school buses to the destination. A student may be dismissed from a field trip ONLY to a parent/guardian (no grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.). Please remember that no photographs should be taken of students.

### Grading Scale

Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, the Robertson County Board of Education voted to change the grading from the traditional scale to a 10-point grading scale. This means the grading scale will be as follows for all grades/subject areas at Heritage Elementary:

A: 90-100

B: 80-89



C: 70-79  
D: 60-69  
F: 59 and below

Please see Board Policy 4.600 for additional information regarding the grading scale.

Students may be given the opportunity to re-do assignments to improve their grades, especially if the student scored below 70%. This will only be done for standards that represent the major work of the grade level and will not be available for all assignments. Students will have to complete additional practice before their re-do assignment so that they can provide evidence of their mastery of the standard.

### **Lost and Found**

If your child has lost an item, please remind them to check lost and found the next school day. Label your child's belongings – it is the best way to ensure the items are returned quickly.

### **Parental Support**

We passionately believe that a strong home and school partnership, along with consistent communications, will help our children achieve excellence at Heritage Elementary School. We thank you in advance for supporting your student in the following ways:

- Check your child's planner daily and look for any unfinished work in folders/binders
- Review your child's weekly newsletter on ClassDojo
- Mark progress report/report card dates on your home calendar
- Download the PowerSchool app to check your child's assignments and progress
- Set up notifications in PowerSchool to contact you when teachers update grades in PowerSchool
- Communicate with your child's teacher frequently if you have questions and/or concerns

### **Teacher Conferences**

If you need to conference with your child's teacher, please call or write a note to make an appointment. Remember that teachers are to be with their students throughout the school day and cannot be called from the classroom to receive phone calls, nor can they conduct conferences while supervising students in the classroom. Conferences will need to be scheduled with teachers during planning time or on days they are not assigned to morning or afternoon duty. Parent-teacher conferences will also be scheduled twice during the school year, once in the fall and once in the spring. **If you would like a conference with an administrator, please ensure that you have already met with your child's classroom teacher prior to requesting a meeting with an administrator.**

### **School Facilities**

It is our goal to provide a safe, clean, and welcoming environment. It is important that we all take pride in our school by keeping it clean and respecting school property.