

Watauga Elementary

2023-2024



Student

Handbook

Doors Open at 6:40

Tardy Bell Rings 7:10

Dismissal Begins 2:05

Car/Bus Departs 2:20

Ridgetopper Hours-2:05-6:00 PM

School Number (615)859-5252

Fax (615)859-5933

Cafeteria (615)859-2694

Ridgetoppers (615)859-0026

Bus Shop (615) 384-4555

Central Office (615)384-5588

Meet Our Tribe

Kelley Armstrong, Principal

Lisa Shrull, Assistant Principal

Lara Flannery, Guidance Counselor

Cindy Horton, Bookkeeper

Gale Cothron, Attendance Clerk

Meghan Betts, Nurse

Misti Lanius, Ridgetopper Director

Misty Reese, Ridgetopper Assistant Director

Becca Clinard, Ridgetots Director

Kelly Neese, Cafeteria Manager

Officer McCurry, SRO

Josh Hinerman, Bus Supervisor

WARRIORS WILL BE SAFE

HOW CAN I PARTNER WITH THE SCHOOL TO KEEP MY CHILD SAFE?

Our first priority will always be to keep your student safe. While we are not able to share all of the details of our security plan to ensure that information doesn't accidentally fall into the wrong hands, we do want to provide you with your part of our safety plan in the event of an emergency.

1. If you are picking up or dropping off students and the school personnel display an evacuation sign, continue moving and evacuate the campus. If this occurs there is a reason the campus is being evacuated for safety. Please pull to a nearby parking area off campus and check DOJO, texts, EMAIL and call out messages from the school with further directions.
2. When signing into the main office you will always need identification. We realize office staff may know you however, in the event the person at the front desk is not familiar with all parents, an ID will be requested.
3. All visitors, including family of the faculty, must sign in through the front desk area and get a visitor sticker.
4. Student emergency cards should be updated regularly. Students will only be released to those individuals listed on the card unless written and/or verbal consent is received from the parent or guardian. If you want someone added or removed from the card you must contact the office and complete a new card. Fill out emergency contact information accurately and keep it updated throughout the year. *This information provides the office staff with the names and contact information of friends and family that you give permission to act in the best interest of your child if we cannot reach you. If there is anyone that you do not want to have access to your student, please give that information to the office and they will red flag the card. If someone tries to make contact with your child that is not on the card you will be contacted for further instructions. PLEASE DO NOT ASK FOR FRIENDS TO EAT LUNCH WITH YOUR STUDENT. WE RESTRICT THIS TO ENSURE WE FOLLOW THE PARENTS THAT HAVE LIMITED ACCESS TO THEIR CHILD. PLEASE ALSO REFRAIN FROM*

TAKING PHOTOS OF OTHER STUDENTS. WE HAVE A LIST OF STUDENTS THAT HAVE A PARENT REQUEST ON FILE NOT TO HAVE THEIR PHOTO TAKEN.

5. If a student has legal documentation stating certain individuals may not have contact with the child, we will red flag their card to add an extra layer of protection.

6. All students being dismissed early **MUST** be signed out through the school office. *If you are visiting the building and wish to sign your child out you must go to the office, sign them out and wait for them to be brought to the office.*

Note to Parents: Watauga Elementary School is one of the safest places for students to be during most crises or natural disasters. The following emergency procedures have been established to keep them safe:

In most cases, students will be kept at school until the emergency is determined to be over. For example, a chemical spill may delay student release when there is risk of exposure.

Under certain circumstances students may be evacuated to another site. If this occurs, parents will be notified through the school website, announcements on local radio and television stations, and through phone calls made to contacts found on the student's Emergency Care Card (ECC), posted DOJO messages and schoolwide calls.

We ask parents and guardians not to telephone the school and tie up the few telephone lines that will be needed for emergency use. The best place to get current updates is to visit the school's website which can be accessed ON DOJO.

Students will be released to parents who come to get them. Procedures for release to other authorized parties, however, will not occur unless pre-release is documented on the student's Emergency Care Card, which is filled out at the beginning of the school year. Parents must keep information on the ECC current.

The family information center will provide up-to-date information on the incident, the status of their children and information on what parents can do to assist.

The student code of conduct will be reviewed with students at the beginning of each nine weeks. Safety drill information will be discussed at this time as well. *Because we do not want confidential information to fall in the wrong hands, we do not give out emergency procedure information to parents. However, please talk with your child and ask if they know what to do during different emergencies. If*

they seem unsure, please let the administration know so we can clear up any misunderstandings.

Safety drills are conducted throughout the school year. These include, but are not limited to, FIRE DRILLS, SEVERE WEATHER DRILLS, EVACUATION DRILLS, LOCK DOWN DRILLS, EARTHQUAKE DRILLS, SHELTER IN PLACE DRILLS. BOMB THREATS AND MISSING CHILD DRILLS.

HOW WILL MY CHILD ARRIVE AND DEPART SCHOOL?

ARRIVAL-Doors open 6:40



Enter off Lake Road using the drive by the playground. Keep to the right in a single file line. All students should remain in the cars until they have reached the unloading area behind the school. Students should say their good-byes and have their supplies ready to exit the car when unloading begins.



Cars should pull to the front staff member and all students remain in the cars until the staff display the signs to "UNLOAD". No students should unload behind the last staff member in the traffic area. Students should exit the cars on the driver's side to avoid walking between vehicles. If they are unable to unload on the driver's side, they should exit the passenger side and walk to a staff member who will walk them to the sidewalk.



Cars should remain parked until the "PULL FORWARD" sign is displayed. This indicates all students have been safely unloaded and traffic can resume.



The front drive by the main entrance is for BUSES ONLY. Anyone wishing to enter the building through the front entrance should park in the front parking area. **Any student arriving after 7:10 should come to the front entrance. TARDY STUDENTS MUST BE SIGNED IN BY A PARENT OR GUARDIAN IN THE FRONT RECEPTION AREA.**



Cars should enter off Lake Road and line up in the drive beside the playground. Parents should remain in cars until students have been dismissed to their cars.

CAR DEPARTURE-Begin loading at 2:10. For student security, any student needing to be dismissed early should be signed out by 2:00 or wait to load with the remainder of the students at dismissal time.



Students will walk to their cars under the supervision of staff. They should load on the driver's side. If they are unable to load on that side, please exit your car and walk them to the passenger door.



When school personnel motions traffic forward you may exit.

Be a role model! Please follow traffic rules and display good character for our students. Remember Robertson County Schools are non-smoking campuses and please end cellphone conversations until your child has been dropped off.

AGAIN- IF YOU PLAN TO SIGN YOUR STUDENT OUT, PLEASE DO SO BEFORE 2:00 OR WAIT AND PICK THEM UP AT DISMISSAL. THIS ASSISTS US IN KEEPING ALL STUDENTS SAFE DURING A VERY BUSY TIME OF DAY.

WARRIORS ARE RESPECTFUL

WATAUGA 2023-2024 ATTENDANCE PLAN AND TRUANCY PROCEDURES

TARDY POLICY

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY STUDENT IS TARDY?

Students must be IN classrooms at 7:10. Students will be marked tardy after that time. If the back door has been closed, you must bring your student to the

front door. PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE REQUIRED TO WALK THEIR STUDENT INTO THE BUILDING AND SIGN THEM IN AT THE FRONT DESK.

Excused Tardie's Include-

Late Bus-Bus Riders will be provided with the opportunity to eat breakfast if the bus is late.

Doctor's Appointment with Note Provided

Student illness- Students with a diagnosed health issue that could cause them to be tardy often should have a doctor's note outlining the diagnosis on file in the school office. Students without a diagnosis that are consistently late due to illness can be required to see the school nurse to seek further information.

UNEXCUSED Tardie's Include-

Late from Breakfast- Car riders should arrive in time to eat and get to class. This usually takes at least 15 minutes. The cafeteria doors close at 7:05. Both car riders and bus riders should be in class at 7:10. The only exception would be if a student's bus is late.

Personal Business- Students cannot be excused due to family business that does not directly require their presence.

Overslept

Car Trouble-Because bus transportation is provided students cannot be excused due to car trouble.

WHAT IF I NEED TO PICK MY STUDENT UP EARLY?

Students must be present for a total of 3.5 hours to receive credit for a half day of school. Our half day mark is 10:45. If a student leaves prior to that time and does not return they will be counted as absent. If the student leaves before that time and returns, they can receive credit for a half day of school if their total hours present equals 3.5.

TARDIES AND EARLY DISMISSALS ARE TOTALED TOGETHER. WHEN THE TOTAL OF UNEXCUSED TARDIES AND/OR EARLY DISMISSALS EQUALS A TOTAL OF 8, IT IS CONSIDERED ONE (1) UNEXCUSED ABSENCE.

8 UNEXCUSED TARDIES AND/OR EARLY DISMISSALS= 1 UNEXCUSED ABSENCE

WHAT DO I DO IF MY CHILD IS ABSENT?

Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused by the building principal/designee.

Excused Absences Include but are not limited to:

1. Illness of student; doctor's note is preferred. A limited number of parent written sick notes are accepted (5 per semester or 10 per school year). If a child is absent 3 consecutive (in a row) days, then a doctor's note is requested.
2. Illness of a family member which requires a student to help at home; (A physician's statement may be required)
3. Death of a family member.
4. Medical Appts. which cannot be scheduled outside school; verification is required.
5. Religious Holidays;
6. Circumstances in the judgement of the principal/designee created by emergencies over which the student has no control. Please contact the school principal to discuss special circumstances.

Unexcused Absences:

ANY STUDENT THAT MISSES TEN CONSECUTIVE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES IS SUBJECT TO BEING DROPPED ON DAY 11.

1. Car trouble -Because bus transportation is provided by the county this cannot be excused.
2. Personal Business-This pertains to business needed to be conducted by parent/guardian that does not directly involve the child (i.e., house cleaning, hair appointments, work in the private sector.)

WHEN AM I REQUIRED TO SEND A DOCTOR'S NOTE?

1. If your student has been absent 3 or more consecutive days.
2. If your child has accumulated a total of ten absences during the school year.
3. Your child is taken to the doctor due to their illness.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT MY STUDENT'S ATTENDANCE RECORD?

Your child's attendance record can always be found on their progress report, report card, or in the Parent PowerSchool account. You are welcome to request a copy of your student's attendance record from the office at any time. We realize that all circumstances do not fall into the above-listed categories. If you have questions regarding a student's attendance record, you may speak to the attendance clerk and/or Mrs. Armstrong.

Chronic Absenteeism

While only unexcused absences accumulate for truancy purposes, the Robertson County Schools firmly believe in the importance of regular school attendance and recognize the role attendance plays in student success. As such, all student absences must be investigated and verified. School attendance is an essential dimension of overall student success. School attendance for children ages 6 to 17 inclusive is mandated by state law (TCA 49-6-3001) and penalties will apply for truant children (TCA 49-6-3007).

WHEN IS A DOCTOR'S NOTE REQUIRED?

-If a student has been absent 3 consecutive days

-If the student has accumulated a total of 10 absences. The parent/guardian will receive a note from the school office letting the parent/guardian know the student is at 10 absences and that a doctor's note will be required.

A PARENT NOTE OR DOCTOR NOTE MUST BE RECEIVED EACH TIME A CHILD IS ABSENT TO BE PLACED IN THEIR ATTENDANCE FOLDER FOR DOCUMENTATION. K-5 STUDENTS WILL BE ALLOWED NO MORE THAN 5 PARENT NOTES PER SEMESTER FOR A TOTAL OF 10 PER SCHOOL YEAR. PLEASE NOTE THAT PRE-APPROVED VACATION DAYS DO COUNT IN THE 5 PARENT NOTES ALLOWED EACH SEMESTER.

WHEN WILL MY CHILD'S MAKEUP WORK BE DUE?

All missed class work or tests may be made up. A reasonable effort must be made, and ample opportunities must be provided by school personnel. Grades may reflect less than full credit. (Exceptions include pre-announced tests and term assignments that will be due upon return.) School work and tests missed for suspensions may be

required to be made up. Students will be allowed the number of days absent plus one to turn in their work for full credit.

Students may be denied the privilege of making up work missed as a result of an unexcused absence or suspension. All schools will review students' attendance and refer students to the Student Services Supervisor.

PHOTO / VIDEO

On occasion, students may be videotaped or photographed while participating in instructional school activities. If parents elect for students to be excluded, they must provide written documentation to the building Principal. Due to confidentiality, video recordings remain the property of the school system and are not to be shared / copied for the public.

Parents may photograph or video their own student, but photos or videos of other students or school personnel are prohibited without prior written notice from parents or guardians.

TIME FOR BREAKFAST AND LUNCH!

ALL ROBERTSON COUNTY STUDENTS ENJOY FREE BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

Lunchroom Guidelines:

1. Students bringing their lunch should refrain from bringing carbonated beverages or energy drinks. Students who bring lunch from home will not be allowed to go through the lunch line.
2. Yogurt tubes, pudding and fruit cups, drink pouches, Lunchables, etc. can be difficult for small fingers to open. There are adults to assist in the lunchroom, however, if students can open these they do not have to wait for their turn.
Please help them practice opening difficult items at home.
3. Lunch Visitors will be allowed each FRIDAY following the criteria below:
 - * Visitor must be on the student's data card or have express permission from parent/guardian. Driver's license must be presented when signing in.
 - * Visitors will wait in the front foyer until their child joins them. Lunch is for the student and their visitor. Friends and extended family members will remain in the cafeteria.
 - * If you are a visitor wishing to purchase a lunch, please let the office know when you sign in.
 - * If the student needs to go to the restroom during your visit please send them to the main office to use the administrator's restroom.

* Students should be sent to the main office at the completion of lunch to be returned to their classrooms.

THESE GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED TO PROTECT OUR STUDENTS. MANY OF OUR STUDENTS HAVE RESTRICTED ACCESS REQUESTS ON FILE AT THE DIRECTION OF GUARDIAN. THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR COMPLIANCE.

DOJO/School Reach/Email

OFFICE ANNOUNCEMENTS-

The Watauga office sends phone calls and emails each Sunday at 2:00pm from the principal, these contain student information and upcoming dates of importance. If you are not receiving these calls, please contact the school office. They will also arrive in email form. Please read and/or listen to the message in its entirety. You will receive periodic texts through School Reach and DOJO as well.

CONTACTING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

If you need to contact either administrator you may do so by email, DOJO message, written note or phone. **Email is usually the best way to reach administrators as they can be monitored if they are in meetings or classrooms.** If you have not received a reply in 24 hours, please reach out again as your message most likely was not received.

COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS AND STAFF

Every classroom teacher (or grade-level) is on DOJO. Related Arts teachers are on DOJO as well. This is the primary communication tool for parents and school staff. It is used to report student discipline, make announcements, give assignments, and answer questions. Parents may also utilize email, leave phone messages or send notes. Again, if you have not had a response in 24 hours, please reach out again.

ALL CALLS AND DOJO MESSAGES WILL BE ADDRESSED DURING TEACHER PLANNING TIME AND AFTER SCHOOL. TEACHERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO RESPOND WHEN IN SUPERVISION

OF STUDENTS. PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE IF YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY.

Homework

Homework is defined as academic work, related to classroom activities, that is assigned to students to be completed outside of class time. Homework assignments are expected to serve a valid educational purpose and be within the capabilities of students. Homework is not assigned as a punitive measure.

Homework is intended to:

1. Reinforce classroom instruction
2. Extend learning objective
3. Develop research skills, independent study habits and time management skills
4. Teach responsibility for completing and returning assigned work
5. Provide an opportunity for parents to better understand what is being taught

The classroom teacher is responsible for determining the extent to which homework assignments shall emphasize independent research, reports, special reading, and problem-solving activities.

Parents/guardians are responsible for encouraging his/her children to accept homework assignments as an important part of the school program.

Students are responsible for completing and turning in homework assignments. Students are encouraged to use computers to complete homework; however, students are responsible for submitting original work.

The length of time that students are expected to spend completing daily homework are:

Grades K-1 10 minutes

Grades 2-3 20 minutes

Grades 4-6 30-60 minutes

These times are meant to serve as general guidelines.

Any concerns regarding homework should be addressed initially to the classroom teacher.

STUDENT HOMEWORK HELP

Robertson County is proud to be in partnership with the Homework Hotline program. Homework Hotline provides one-on-one free tutoring by phone to Middle Tennessee students and parents. With Homework Hotline, students tackle new concepts, complete challenging assignments, and gain academic skills. Homework Hotline helps students achieve and thrive - one assignment at a time. Students who get the help they seek return to school better prepared and less discouraged.

Bilingual assistance is available in several languages. This program is free thanks to the program's sponsor. Robertson County Schools students may obtain homework help in any subject by calling the toll-free number at 1-888-868-5777 or 615-298-6636 on Monday through Thursday from 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm or you can email questions to director@homeworkhotline.info.

Powerschool

Powerschool is the program that Robertson County Schools use to house student information. This program provides access to parents and students to obtain student grades and attendance. You may connect to the parent portal by using the web address, <https://powerschool.rcstn.net/public/>, or downloading the Powerschool app for parents on your mobile device. During open house, a letter will be given to the parent/guardian that will have all the information needed to access your child's account. If you need an additional letter, you did not receive your letter, or need help with your child's account please contact the main office.

School Nurse

Watauga does have a full-time school nurse (7:10am-2:10pm), Meghan Betts. If your child becomes ill or is involved in a more serious accident, every effort will be made to contact the parent as soon as possible. If the parent cannot be reached, the emergency number listed on the student's emergency contact form will be called. In the event of a significant injury or illness, appropriate medical aid will be summoned. For minor issues, the nurse will address the issue and send the child back to class. If your child has seen the nurse for a minor issue, you may not be called each time. Please use the following guidelines when deciding about your child attending school. If you are unsure whether your child should attend school, please contact the school nurse or main office to help assist in making that decision. Nurse Meghan can be reached via email meghan.betts@rcstn.net, on Class DOJO or by calling the school and being transferred.

- ✓ **Fever: 100 Degrees or Greater:** A child should have normal temperature and be in normal health and fever free for 24 hours without medication before returning to school.
- ✓ **Vomiting or Diarrhea:** No vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.
- ✓ **Strep Throat or a sore throat** that is accompanied by fever and enlarged nodules in the neck. Your child may return to school 24 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment and being fever free.
- ✓ **Rash of Unknown Cause:** Your child should remain home until the cause is determined.
- ✓ **Conjunctivitis/Pinkeye:** A reddening of the white of the eye and inner eyelids is noted along with drainage, itching, pain and matting of the eyes. Your child should not attend school until medical attention has determined if it is conjunctivitis (for which medication is required), allergies, or a cold.
- ✓ **Head lice or Nits:** Your child may return to school after proper treatment and when all the lice have been removed. Until checked by the school nurse, your child will not

be allowed to use school transportation (bus). Nurse Meghan will complete a head check to clear return.

Medications

School personnel will give no medications unless ordered by a doctor (with the proper paperwork) or over-the-counter medications that are appropriate for the child's age. If your child needs to take any medication at school, please contact the main office or school nurse to obtain the correct medication form. A form must be completed by the parent for over-the-counter medications. For medication prescribed by a doctor the form must be completed by the parent AND the doctor prescribing the medication. Before medication can be given the parent needs to have the correct order forms filled out by doctor, if necessary, Watauga will be glad to assist parents/guardians by faxing medication forms to the doctor (note faxing can take a few days for office to return and parents must sign release forms first). A parent/guardian is required to bring all medications, in the original container, and necessary paperwork to the school. Over the counter medications must be unopened. Please contact Nurse Meghan if your student has any medication or medical needs.

Conversations to Have with Your Students

Students often have difficulty determining which topics are appropriate for school and which should be reserved for home. Below you will find several topics which have come up at school. Please discuss these with your child to prevent school issues.

1. Restrooms are not for play. Students should respect the privacy of others and refrain from looking in or under stalls. It is also expected that private parts will remain private and will not be shown or discussed with other students. Finally, students should use the restroom facilities appropriately by using the urinals and commodes as they would if you were present.
2. Students have access to a multitude of television and media resources. Please discuss with your child what is an acceptable conversation for school and what items should be discussed at home.
3. Often disagreements which occur at sleepovers, at ballgames or playdates resurface at school and are disruptive. Please make sure any disputes that occur outside of school or via social media are settled. When it disrupts the school day it then becomes a school issue.
4. Robertson County Board Policy prohibits students in grades K-2 from having cell phones, smart watches and/or electronic devices at school. Students in grades 3-5 may have these devices only under direct teacher supervision and should remain out of sight unless the teacher has given permission for them to be used. If a student violates these guidelines the device will be taken up and placed in the school vault until the parent comes to pick up.

5. Practice self-care skills such as learning to tie shoes, taking care of toileting needs and managing clothing.

6. Practice personal information-their birthday, phone number and address.

7. ALL THREATS ARE TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR STUDENT UNDERSTANDS ANY COMMENTS WHICH INCLUDE VIOLENCE WILL BE SUBJECT TO SUSPENSION.

We appreciate your help with these topics. Often once these topics are addressed, they are no longer a problem. As students learn to navigate their world, educating them on what is appropriate at school and in public venues helps them make good social decisions.

We look forward to an outstanding year!