

HICKORY FLAT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

STUDENT / PARENT HANDBOOK

2024–2025



**2755 East Cherokee Drive
Canton, GA 30115
770-704-1444**

Mrs. Kerry Estep, Principal

***Mrs. Denna Vance, Assistant Principal
Mr. Nick Zomer, Assistant Principal***

THUNDERBIRD BATTLE CRY

We are the Thunderbirds!
And we are proud!
We can be quiet.
But sometimes loud!
We try our best
In all we do,
And we will #
BE KIND TO YOU!

We have a Thunderbird!
His name is Thor!
He will be awesome
forevermore!
He tries his best
In all he does.
And he will #
BE KIND TO US!

MISSION STATEMENT

We at *Hickory Flat Elementary*:

HONOR the rich legacy of learning that has
taken place in this school since 1838.

FOCUS on each student and empower his/her
learning.

EXCEL in building a foundation of character
and academic excellence.

SOAR by Demonstrating our 'Flat 5' and
#BeKind initiative in all aspects of life.

MASCOT

Thunderbirds



COLORS

Kelly Green and White with accents of black and silver.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Hickory Flat offers an after-school program (ASP) which provides supervision for students from 2:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. each day that school is in session. The program is open to children enrolled in K-5 at Hickory Flat. THIS IS A PRE-PAID PROGRAM.

The cost of the program is \$60.00 per week and/or \$15.00 per day per child. This is a pre-paid program. There is a \$20.00 daily drop-in fee for students placed in ASP after 11:59pm on Sunday the prior week. In addition, there is a late fee for picking up a student after 6:00 p.m. (per the school's clock). The After-School Program is self-supporting and relies entirely on the funds generated from student participation to pay salaries and purchase supplies. The funds may also be used for instructional materials and facility improvements to the school. Prices are set by CCSD and may be subject to change.

We will offer weekly activities periodically for an additional fee from outside-approved companies. Some of the various activities may include drama, guitar, hit-hop dance, art, basketball, etc.

To register your child and/or obtain additional information or guidelines concerning the program, contact the school office at 770-704-1444.

For student safety, a photo I.D. is required when signing a student out of the After-School Program.

ATTENDANCE

Arrival/Dismissal Time (per the school's clock)

- 7:00am – 7:35am - Arrival time. Students report to assigned area.
- 7:15 - Report to Homeroom
- 7:35am - Instructional day begins
- Tardy after 7:35am
- 2:15pm - Bus rider dismissal
- 2:25pm - Car rider dismissal

For safety reasons, students not picked up by 2:45pm are enrolled in the After-School Program for a \$20 drop in fee.

Absences

Although circumstances may necessitate that a student be absent from school, the Cherokee County Board of Education recognizes that optimal learning takes place when the student is present and involved in classroom activities. Accordingly, it is critically important that parents/guardians make every effort to have their children attend school.

As permitted under state law and State Board of Education policies, a student's absence, tardy, or early checkout may be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness and when attendance in school would endanger their health, or the health of others.

2. Serious illness or death of an immediate family member.
3. Mandated by order of governmental agencies, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, or by a court order.
4. Celebrating religious holidays.
5. Conditions that render attendance impossible or hazardous to one's health or safety.
6. Registering to vote or voting, for a period not to exceed one day.

When a student receives 7 unexcused absences, the Social Worker will be contacted.

Checkouts and Tardiness

- Provide a note from a doctor or dentist for tardiness and checkouts to be excused.
- Be prepared to present a photo I.D. when checking out your student.
- The office staff will call for your student.
- **There will be no checkouts after 1:45pm or during bus dismissal.**
- Parents must be present in the front office before student is called from class.

Excuses

Parents/Guardians will provide excuses for absences in writing (note or email to Susan Moon at susan.moon@cherookeek12.net) on the day the student returns to school OR through Parent Square. Please include:

- Student name
- Date of the absence
- Reason for the absence
- Parent/guardian signature.

All written excuses will be evaluated by administration or designee to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused. School administration has the right to request official documentation for excusal.

CAFETERIA INFORMATION

MEAL	STUDENT REGULAR	STUDENT REDUCED	ADULT/STAFF	VISITOR/NON- STUDENT
Elementary Breakfast	\$1.60	\$.30	\$2.50	\$2.75
Elementary Lunch	\$2.45	\$.40	\$5.00	\$5.25

PAYING FOR MEALS ONLINE

Parents must set up an account at linqconnect.com to add funds. You will need your child's student ID (the 5- or 6-digit ID your child uses to buy meals); if you don't have this ID, the front office of your child's school can provide it to you.

LINQ Connect allows families to view all of their students in one profile. Within the LINQ Connect portal you can fund your student's meal payments by adding one-time or recurring

funds, review purchases made and monitor the current balances, transfer dollars between students, apply for free and reduced meal benefits, and more. The money you had left in your child's meal account at the end of last school year will automatically move over to the new system for a seamless transition. Parents can continue to send checks to the school to be deposited into their LINQ Connect account if they prefer. Visit your app store to find and download "LINQ Connect" or use the website.

Parents also are reminded that CCSD participates in the Federal free and reduced-price lunch program, and applications are accepted year-round: www.lunchapplication.com

Here are some helpful FAQ's to get you started! https://info.linq.com/.../1683839542JzZw5IUZ/LC_FAQs_All.pdf

Questions? Please call CCSD School Nutrition at 770-721-8419.

CAFETERIA VISITORS

Cafeteria Visitors will be allowed after September 1st. All parents/visitors planning to eat with their students must show valid ID to be admitted. All visitors must be on the student's checkout list. All parents/visitors will eat lunch at the Visitor Table (labeled) **with their child/student only**. Parents are invited on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS BRINGING LUNCH TO SCHOOL

- Food purchased from outside "fast food" restaurants, remaining in original packaging (i.e., bags and wrappers), is not permitted in the school cafeteria. This includes lunch being dropped off in the front office for delivery to students to consume in the cafeteria.
- Food brought from home must be prepared at home. Food will not be refrigerated, heated or prepared by staff.
- Student use of kitchen equipment is not permitted.

CAR RIDERS

Please obtain a car rider tag from the front office to hang from your rearview mirror for afternoon pickup. Additional cards are available in the front office. If you do not have the green and white car rider tag when picking up your child/children, you will be asked to park and enter the building to present your identification to the office who will verify the ability for pickup.

All car riders will be required to open their own car doors. Staff will not open vehicle doors. All car riders will enter and exit the car from the right side (passenger side) of the vehicle.

For safety of all students and staff, please do not pass/go around other vehicles in the car rider line unless directed to do so by school staff.

NOTE: No student and/or parent will be allowed to re-enter a classroom after 2:45pm. It is the responsibility of the student to take home belongings and assignments.

Our goal is to greet the children and have them begin their day safely. To expedite this process, please pull as far forward as the line allows. Please know that any inconvenience we cause you in the car line is only so that we can provide a safe environment for each student.

Morning Car Riders/Drop Off: If you choose to walk your child to the crosswalk, please park in the center parking spaces only. Use the middle sidewalk to the crosswalk. Follow the directions of School Personnel regarding where and when to cross. No student should walk to the crosswalk without adult presence.

Please reference Appendix A: Morning Car Rider Drop-Off for a map showing the drop off zones in the front of the building.

CANVAS

Canvas is the Learning Management System that will allow you to see helpful items such as instructional resources, assignments, upcoming due dates, grades, and feedback.

Please sign up for Canvas. Contact your child's teacher if you have questions or enter a CCSD Canvas Help Desk Ticket on the CCSD website. If you had a Canvas login for previous school years with CCSD, you do not need to register again.

CLINIC / MEDICATIONS

The Hickory Flat school nurse provides care from 7:00am to 3:00pm daily. Health guidelines for our school are as follows:

1. **To prevent the spreading of illness, please do not send a child to school that is sick and/or has a fever. Please send a note if you wish to be contacted on a day you suspect your child may be ill.**
2. When at all possible, we encourage you to schedule your child's medication so that it may be given at home. All medications must be housed, and dispensed, from the office or clinic. A medication authorization form must be completed by parents or guardians requesting the administration of any medication. This form may be downloaded from the CCSD website under "Forms" or can be obtained from the front office. **Prescription medication must be in the original pharmacy container.** The written instructions on the pharmacy label will be followed. Over-the-counter medications must be sealed and provided to the school in the original container. Dosage will not exceed instruction on label regardless of parent instructions. A secondary prescription bottle must be provided for students receiving medication during After School Program.
3. Forms are available on the CCSD website to provide for special situations such as injections, personal possession of inhalers, epinephrine pens, etc.
4. For students taking medication daily, please send a box of 3oz. cups for their use.
5. Please notify Nurse JJ of any known allergies.

COUNSELOR

HFES has 2 counselors on staff for student counseling, Character Education, and Career State-Mandated lessons. Sandra Hude serves as counselor for grades K, 1, 2 and Lindsay Loughlin serves as the counselor for grades 3, 4, 5. Parents may email their grade level counselor with concerns as well as students asking to see them throughout the school day.

Counseling (Individual and Group)

Students are encouraged to consult the counselor if they need help with an issue. Students may request to see their counselor by dropping a note in the black box in the hallway near the counseling offices. Individual counseling sessions are conducted by listening to students'

concerns, identifying, and solving problems, discussing alternative solutions, and formulating a plan of action. Group counseling sessions are held for students experiencing similar issues, such as divorce, relocation, or shyness (We will conduct these groups with like classes).

CHARACTER EDUCATION

The counselors lead small group and classroom discussions and activities, helping children develop better self-concept and improve interpersonal skills. They will assist students in making appropriate life development assistance, such as help with transitions and with student self-improvement. Our entire Character Education Program is fueled by the guiding principles of our #BeKind initiative. These principles are embedded in the curriculum of all grade levels, the “Flat 5,” and the HFES Mission Statement.

DISCIPLINE

CCSD DISCIPLINE CODE HANDBOOK

Students at Hickory Flat Elementary School are expected to abide to the Cherokee County Discipline Code. A copy may be downloaded from the Cherokee County School District website under the “Handbook” tab.



- ① SHOW **RESPECT** FOR SELF,
OTHERS AND PROPERTY.
- ② BE **HONEST**.
- ③ BE **SAFE** AT ALL TIMES.
- ④ BE THE **BEST** PERSON THAT
YOU CAN BE.
- ⑤ **#BEKIND**

DRESS CODE

Refer to the CCSD Code of Conduct Appendix A.

DRILLS

Fire Drills are held once a month. Tornado and Code Red drills are practiced each semester.

EMERGENCIES

The administrative staff at Hickory Flat does not have the power or ability to delay, postpone or cancel school. In the event of severe weather approaching our area and it becomes necessary to cancel school/close school early, the announcement will be made on all metro Atlanta television stations (ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX) as well as the following radio stations: WSB 750AM or 95.5FM, WGST 640AM, WLGA 101.1FM/1560AM. Emergency closure announcements will also be posted on the CCSD website www.cherokeek12.net, as well as via social media avenues, such as the CCSD Facebook (Cherokee County GA School District) and Twitter (@cherokeeschools).

EARLY DISMISSAL/RELEASE

In the event of early dismissal, transportation cannot be delayed for students to call parents. Students MUST be sent home immediately when all other students are released.

It is imperative that parents/guardians complete the emergency cards issued to you in the Back to School Gateway online so that we can insure prompt, efficient response. It is the parent's responsibility to notify us immediately, preferably in writing, of any changes that need to be made. (If a current form is NOT on file in the school office, the child will be sent home according to whatever transportation information is available on record.) It is imperative that the Emergency Transportation Instruction forms are complete and on file at the school and students are aware of the plan.

Emergency Up-Date Information

If you contact information changes during the school year, please update on Registration Gateway.

FIELD TRIPS

Prior to any field trips, an informational letter is sent home with each student describing the trip and explaining any fees involved. This letter includes a permission slip that must be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the teacher. Attending field trips is a privilege and not a right.

Anyone attending a HFES field trip must have a completed Volunteer Form submitted to the school one week prior to the event. Email Jean White with Volunteer Forms (jean.white@cherokeek12.net)

GIFTS

Gifts, flowers, and balloons to individual students cannot be delivered at school. For safety reasons, the Transportation Department does not allow such items on the bus.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Teachers at Hickory Flat understand the need for balance between school and home. Homework will not be assigned for the sake of work completion at home. Students will be expected to read for a minimum of 20 minutes per night and complete 45 minutes of iReady each week.

Reference the CCSD School Board Policy Manual for in-depth information.

INSURANCE

Accident insurance is available to students. Information provided in the Back to School Gateway.

INVITATIONS

Written invitations to social events outside of school should be mailed and not distributed at school. Teachers are not allowed to provide these to students, regardless of whether it is a whole group or selected individuals. Teachers are not authorized to provide personal information for students, such as parent phone numbers or parent email address.

LOST AND FOUND

Articles of clothing, books, and other items lost at school are taken to the “Lost and Found” rack in the front lobby. All unclaimed articles of clothing are given to charity **weekly**.
PLEASE WRITE YOUR CHILD’S NAME ON ALL OF HIS/HER POSSESSIONS.

MAKE-UP WORK

Make-up work is available to students when they return to school following an **EXCUSED ABSENCE**. In the event of an **extended EXCUSED ABSENCE**, all missing assignments are located in Canvas under the Week At A Glance. It is the responsibility of students to make up all assignments that are missed. The teacher will assist the student by providing directions and explanations.

MEDIA CENTER

The media center offers open access to information for all students at Hickory Flat. Students are encouraged to visit the media center to check out books that interest and challenge them in their reading endeavors. Students in kindergarten can check out one book at a time. Students in first through fifth grade can check out two books at a time. Books may be checked out for two weeks but can be renewed if students need to keep the book longer for various reasons. No fines are imposed for overdue books, but students are not permitted to check out additional books until the overdue book is returned to the library or renewed. Overdue notices will be sent periodically to the students by email or through their homeroom teacher. Payment for lost or damaged books must be made as soon as possible during the school year. Check out privileges are suspended until payment is made for the lost or damaged book. All payments must be cleared by the end of the school year.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

Please join our award-winning PTA! Hickory Flat is fortunate to have a very active and supportive parent/teacher association. We invite you to take part in the many activities and opportunities planned throughout the school year. We are all in this together!

DISCLAIMER: Although the Cherokee County Board of Education and Cherokee County School District support and commend the local Parent Teacher Associations, the Cherokee County board of Education and Cherokee County School District cannot, and will not, be responsible for any injuries or other damages resulting from any PTA functions or events.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Cooperation between the parent and teacher is essential for a child's progress. Problems should always be addressed with the teacher first; then, if necessary, with an administrator. Requests for parent/teacher conferences may be made by contacting the teacher or the school office to leave a message for the teacher. Teachers are unable to receive/return phone calls and emails during the academic day. Parents/Volunteers are not permitted to "drop-in" for unannounced conferences. Conferences will be scheduled before/after school or during teacher planning times.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately on P.E. days:

- appropriate shoes (closed toe rubber-soled shoes- **NO** sandals/flip-flops, Crocs, boots, shoes with heels)
- **NO** dresses or skirts (unless shorts are worn under them)
- **NO** jewelry

SOCIAL NETWORKING

We want to keep you informed on what is happening at Hickory Flat.

Facebook: Hickory Flat ES Thunderbirds

Twitter: @HFThunderbirds

STANDARDS OF EVALUATION

Evaluation is an ongoing process. Standards for evaluating student growth in knowledge, skills, and behavior are communicated to parents through report cards, plans for remediation, personal notices, conferences, and phone calls. Teachers use a variety of methods to evaluate a student's progress toward stated objectives on daily, weekly, monthly, end-of-level, and a semester basis. Teacher-made tests, standardized tests, district benchmarks, informal observations of student performance, class participation, GKIDS (for Kindergarten) and formal tests are the evaluative procedures used in determining a child's progress.

Report cards will be distributed the week after the conclusion of each nine-week grading period through Parent Square on the date listed in the CCSD Student Handbook. (Any student enrolled for at least three weeks of any one grading period is entitled to a report card.)

TECHNOLOGY

Technology is an important part of education that opens the doors to exciting and engaged learning. Each K-5 grade classroom has an Interactive Board. The Media Center has iPads and laptops for student use.

Our 3rd-5th grade students are 1:1 laptops for use during the school day. These laptops do not go home.

Grades Kindergarten – 2nd have access to iPads and laptops to share amongst the grade level.

TELEPHONES

School phones are not for student use and can be used only in case of emergency. Field trip permission slips, transportation notes, forgotten lunches, lunch money, homework, projects, messages for parents, etc., are not permissible reasons. Work with your child to eliminate these situations that can be settled in advance. If you are dropping off an item left at home, please use the cart by the front door. Office staff will get the item to your child. **Students are not permitted use cell phones, smart watches, or other electronic devices at school, this is a CCSD policy.**

TESTING DATES

Please refer to the CCSD Student Handbook for these dates.

TEXTBOOK POLICY

Hickory Flat complies with the Cherokee County School Board Policy which states:

When textbooks, library books, or other instructional materials are not returned to the school in a form suitable for continued use, it shall be the responsibility of the student and their parents or guardians to reimburse the Cherokee County School System for the cost of replacement of the textbook, library book, or other materials.

TOYS/ELECTRONICS, ETC.

Students are not permitted to bring cell phones, smart watches, electronic games, computer devices, iPods, MP3's, toys, gum, candy, fidget spinners etc. to school unless approved for a specific event. If brought, they will be confiscated and will remain in the office until picked up by a parent (return at the discretion of administration). Repeat offenses will result in discipline consequences.

TRANSPORTATION

HFES Transportation Forms should be completed by parents DAILY. The form is located in student's grade level folder. Under guidance from the CCSD Transportation Department, Hickory Flat cannot authorize students to ride a bus home with another student. Students are only to ride their assigned bus to their assigned stop. HFES office staff or administration do not have the authority to override this policy.

Transportation Changes can be made to ASP Drop-In ONLY for the safety of our Thunderbirds.

- On the HFES webpage, there is a change of Transportation form for EMERGENCY use only.
- Parents must complete PRIOR to 1:30pm. No changes will be accepted after that time.
- The only change that will be approved are from the indicated method to ASP.

Bus Regulations

Riding the school bus is a privilege extended to students, which can be taken away at any time for disruptive or unsatisfactory behavior. The driver must be able to concentrate without distractions and student related problems. School bus drivers may assign students to seats. If further action is necessary, the driver may refer students to the administration, and the administration may take further action. All children being transported are under the authority of the bus driver and must obey his/her requests. Students should treat a bus driver in a respectful manner. Misbehavior on the bus may result in bus suspension.

Student may NOT ride the bus home with a friend. Students are allowed to ride home on their neighborhood bus only (to the address listed on file).

All CCSD students in grades K-3 have a yellow plastic tag attached to their bookbag to indicate that a parent/guardian must be present to pick up this child from the bus. Even if a K-3 student is primarily a car rider, we ask that all students in this age range keep the yellow tag on their bookbag.

Parents/guardians must be present at the bus stop to obtain their child from the bus (for grades K-3). Drivers are expected to make eye contact with parent/guardians of students with yellow tags. Please exit your vehicle, home, or away from other obstructions when receiving your child from the school bus. Failure to follow will result in student being returned to the school.

Students on Reassignments

Students that attend Hickory Flat on Reassignment are not permitted to ride CCSD transportation to and from school.

VIDEOTAPING, WEB PAGE, NEWSPAPER

During the school year, your child may be videotaped or may have his/her picture taken while participating in various school activities, projects, and programs. These pictures may be released to the media, placed on our web page, or posted on social media. If you do not wish for your child to be videotaped or have his/her picture taken, please complete and sign the appropriate document in the first day forms on Registration Gateway.

VISITORS

When appropriate, visitors are welcome at Hickory Flat; however, for the protection of students, all visitors are always required to register in the front office and wear a visitor's badge. Visitors must also follow CCSD dress code guidelines. Visitation to your child's classroom must be prearranged with the teacher. **To minimize distractions and support space limitations, siblings of any age, preschool through high school, will not be permitted to visit classrooms during instructional time or field trips.**

PARENTS ARE TO VISIT ONLY THE AREA DESIGNATED ON THE VISITOR BADGE.

WEAPONS

In keeping with the Cherokee County School District's Major System priority of providing a safe and secure environment for teaching and learning, the School District strictly forbids all employees, parents/legal guardians and visitors, with the exception of law enforcement and other public safety officials acting in their official capacity, to possess, carry or have within their control of any weapon or explosive compound as defined by Georgia law O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1 inside of or within 1,000 feet of any school building, administrative or support facility, on school grounds, at school functions or activities, on school buses or school vehicles, or within any privately owned vehicle parked on any school district property.

WITHDRAWALS

The classroom teacher and school office should be notified **at least one day in advance** when a student is going to move. A transfer/withdrawal form will be completed for you to take to the new school if prior notice is given. All lunch charges and ASP balance must be paid and library books are to be returned before the transfer/withdrawal form will be released to the parent.

APPENDIX A: MORNING DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

