



STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

2024-2025

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Principal

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Principal's Message

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to Ball Ground Elementary STEM Academy! The teachers and staff have been enthusiastically planning to make this a special year for your child. We are dedicated to providing a safe and supportive environment in which every student is challenged to achieve to his/her fullest potential. The dedicated teachers at Ball Ground are committed to utilizing the most current and effective strategies, materials, and technology to ensure a rigorous school year for your child. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with our guidelines and procedures and then review them with your child. A clear understanding of school-wide expectations will enable your child to have a successful year. Thank you in advance for your cooperation, commitment, and support of BGSA staff and students. It will be a pleasure to work closely with each parent as we continue Ball Ground's history of being "Rich in Tradition and A Great Place to Learn!"

Mrs. Melinda Roulier
Principal

ASP

- ASP is a pre-paid after-school program offered to all students in K-5 from 2:30-6:00 p.m.
- Cash/Check payments must be received by 3 p.m. on Friday in order to register your child for the following week. Online payments must be received by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday in order to register your child for the following week. Rate for the full week is \$12/day. Rate for specific days during the week, but not the full week is \$15/day. The Drop-In Rate is \$20/day and is for emergency situations only. If you have an emergency and need your child to stay in ASP, please call the front office before 1:00 p.m.
- Check out will be in the rear of the building through the back lobby doors closest to the cafeteria. Please enter the school via Old Canton Rd off Coy M Holdcomb Dr. (Bus entrance)

ATTENDANCE

- Children should arrive at school between 7:00 a.m. - 7:35 a.m. Dismissal time for students is 2:15 p.m.
- Any child leaving school BEFORE 11:00 a.m. or arriving to school AFTER 11:00 a.m. will be marked as absent.
- Students who are not in their classroom when the bell rings at 7:35 will be marked Tardy.
- Parents of students with excessive absences may be required by the school administrator to provide physician's notes for absences to be considered excused. Prior to seven absences, interventions may include parent conferences, attendance agreements, notifications, extended day tutoring (EXP), or counselor referral. If there continue to be attendance concerns after an attendance meeting has been held, the school social worker will be contacted. The GA DOE deems 10 days absent from school as "unacceptable attendance". One of the greatest indicators of academic success and graduation is attendance.
- Students may not be checked out to attend parties or activities of a sibling.
- A written excuse MUST be sent to the teacher within FIVE days of any absence. Include the child's complete name, teacher's name, date(s) of absence, reason for absence and parent signature. PLEASE do not respond to the automated attendance notifications from ParentSquare...sending a note or email to your child's teacher remains the preferred method to provide an excuse for your child's absence.

BIRTHDAYS or SPECIAL OCCASIONS

- Balloons, flowers, gifts, or presents shall not be brought to school or delivered to classrooms for students.
- Birthday treats may be dropped off in the front office. We encourage you to send in mini cupcakes (or treat of a similar size) rather than full-sized cupcakes.
- Unless all students in the classroom are invited to the event, invitations may not be distributed at school.

BUS RIDER PROCEDURES

- Riding the school bus is a privilege. This privilege can be withheld for disruptive or unsatisfactory behavior. Students who ride the bus are expected to stay in their seats while the bus is in motion, speak in low voices, refrain from throwing objects, keep heads, arms and hands inside the bus, keep hands and feet to themselves, cooperate with the bus driver, and act in a respectful manner.
- All students being transported are under the authority of the bus driver and MUST obey his/her requests.
- Bus passes will only be approved by the CCSD Department of Transportation in the case of an extreme emergency.
- All students in K-3 will have a yellow tag attached to their backpack. This notifies the driver that these students must have an appropriate adult at the bus stop. If there is no adult at the bus stop, the driver will return the student to the school and the parent will be contacted.
- Please visit <https://www.cherokeek12.net/divisions/support-services/transportation> to find your child's bus stop, access the Parent Guide for Parent Safety, and contact information for the Department of Transportation.

CAFETERIA

Good table manners and respect for others in the cafeteria are expected. Lunchroom monitors are responsible for supporting and supervising the students in the cafeteria. All students should obey the directions and requests of the lunchroom monitors. We expect children to eat and handle food properly. If behavior problems arise, the monitors have the option to move students to the silent table for the remainder of the lunch period.

- Information about menus, meal prices, and meal payments can be found by visiting <https://bges.cherokeek12.net/menus>.
- Breakfast is served from 7:00-7:30 a.m. All breakfast meals are served as grab and go for consumption in the classroom. Students who arrive by Car Rider are encouraged to arrive no later than 7:25 in order to have time to get to the cafeteria and to class prior to the Tardy bell and have time to finish eating before instruction begins.
- Free and reduced lunch forms are available in the school office or can be filled out online at www.lunchapplication.com. We encourage all families to complete the application even if you do not think you will qualify.
- Lunch visitors will be allowed after August 16th this year. Adult lunches are \$5.25 or \$6.00 for special events. **Remember, when you come to have lunch with your student you must not interrupt the lunch of other students. Parents will sit at a visitor table with their child only (no friends). All visitors MUST stop at the office for a Visitor Pass and pay as you go through the lunch line with your child.**
- NO CANNED, BOTTLED (glass or plastic) and/or CARBONATED DRINKS ARE PERMITTED IN THE CAFETERIA, CLASSROOM, OR SCHOOL BUS.
- FOOD and/or SOFT DRINKS FROM LOCAL AREA RESTAURANTS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE LUNCHROOM and CANNOT REMAIN IN THEIR ORIGINAL PACKAGING. If you arrive with outside food from a restaurant, you will not be allowed to take it to the cafeteria.

CAR RIDER PROCEDURES

Car Rider drop-off and pick-up can be frustrating at times. We ask that everyone please review the guidelines below to make our Car Rider lines run as smoothly as possible. Please be patient with other parents, staff, and students. Remember that your children are watching and learning from you so please be good role models for kindness and respect for others. Thank you!

- Cars dropping off or picking students up from the car rider line will enter the parking lot to the right of the school. The traffic pattern is one way in a counter clockwise direction looping through the side lot. Students should exit the vehicle on the passenger side for safety. Please do not pull around the car in front of you unless directed by a school employee.
- If your child needs assistance getting out of the vehicle, please pull down to the rock. DO NOT exit your vehicle in the car rider lane unless you have pulled to the rock in the morning or you have pulled into a

parking spot in the afternoon. If your child needs assistance buckling, please pull into the parking lot to assist them so that the car rider line can keep moving.

- Morning Car Rider drop-off begins at 7AM along the front of the school. Please do not let your child exit the car until you see staff on the sidewalk. During the regular arrival time of 7AM-7:35AM, ALL CAR RIDERS MUST USE THE CAR RIDER LANE. The front parking lot will only be for staff or visitors with a scheduled meeting. If your child plans to eat breakfast, they need to be dropped off no later than 7:25AM so they have time to get to the cafeteria, get breakfast, and get to class before the Tardy Bell rings. All students are expected to be in the classroom when the Tardy Bell rings at 7:35 when teachers take attendance.
- Afternoon dismissal does not begin until 2:15. We will not begin calling car rider names until around 2:20. After the first couple weeks and we are in a good routine, our car rider line does not take longer than 25-30 minutes from the time we start until we call the last name. Therefore, there shouldn't be any reason for parents to begin lining up prior to 2:15.
 - Supervised pick-up will be provided between 2:20 - 2:45p.m. At 2:45 p.m., students will be enrolled into ASP for a drop-in fee of \$20 and will need to be picked up from the ASP desk at the back of the school.
 - Please utilize both righthand lanes when entering the school and then zipper (every other car) into the side parking lot loop.
 - Please follow all car-rider directions and have your tag visible each day. If you do not have a car rider tag and are not immediately recognized by staff, you will be asked to provide identification.
 - To request a car rider tag, email donna.mele@cherokeek12.net.
- Car Rider Traffic - Our school does not qualify for a crossing guard for arrival and dismissal because the length of our driveway should be sufficient to allow for no backing up onto Valley Street. The only time we run into issues on Valley Street is when too many car riders arrive between 7:25-7:35 in the morning or when too many cars begin lining up in the afternoon before 2:15. In the morning, we are asking you to try to arrive between 7-7:15AM and for all cars coming to campus where a left-hand turn into the drive is necessary, please continue down Valley street to turn around in the post office parking lot so as to not block through traffic. In the afternoon, PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE do not arrive before 2:15!!! Access to the front lanes must stay clear for our SPED student dismissal at 2PM, for grade levels who use the side parking lot and fields for recess, and for emergency vehicles in the event we have an emergency. If you arrive before 2:15, you may be asked to park in a parking space or leave campus.
- Please keep the line moving. During arrival and dismissal time, the car rider line takes precedence over the pedestrian crosswalk. Pedestrians will be asked to wait until the car rider line stops and you are waved across by a staff member. Drivers should move forward with caution but should not stop for pedestrians waiting to cross.

CELL PHONES AND SMART DEVICES

- Cell phones/Smart Devices (including smart watches)/Earbuds may not be used in elementary school during non-instructional time or during bus transportation.
- Cell phones/Smart Devices need to be powered off and stored out of sight in the student backpack. If a student is using a watch for anything other than checking the time, they will be asked to put the device in their backpack.
- Parents who need to communicate with their child during the school day should contact the front office.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

- If a parent has a concern for a student that needs to be addressed, a conference with the teacher should be scheduled. Only after the parent/teacher conference has not successfully resolved the concern should the parent make an appointment with administration.

COMMUNICATION

- The TRIBE Tribune, a weekly parent/family newsletter will be sent through ParentSquare sometime between Friday afternoon and Sunday evening prior to the following week. To access all content, it is best to open the newsletter in a web browser.
- Once the district has addressed the issues between Synergy and ParentSquare for teachers, they will begin communicating with parents regularly through this platform.
- Teachers can also be reached by email, but keep in mind that they may not view emails until the end of the school day and have 24 hours to respond. If you need immediate attention, please contact the front office.
- We also utilize social media outlets to highlight learning, share fun events, and share updates from our partners, Creekland and Creekview friends, and the district.
- Teachers post weekly planners in Canvas that parents can view to see a snapshot of the learning objectives for the week. If you are not already an observer for your child in Canvas, please reach out to your child's teacher for more information.
- Synergy and ParentVue – Synergy is the district's new Student Information System that has taken the place of Aspen. ParentVue allows parents to view and update demographic information, view attendance, and complete back to school forms. If you have not set up your ParentVue account, please contact Amy.waters@cherokeek12.net for assistance.

DISCIPLINE

- Ball Ground students will follow the policies and procedures for discipline set forth in the school system's discipline guide found in the Cherokee County School District Student/Parent Handbook and Code of Conduct. You can access these documents by visiting <https://www.cherokeek12.net/handbook>.

DRESS CODE

- The purpose of a dress code is to promote a safe and orderly learning environment in our schools while preparing all students for later success in the workplace. The District's Student Dress Code was developed through the direction of the Superintendent and with the cooperation of parents, students, teachers and administrators. The following regulations regarding the dress code apply to students while on school grounds, while remote learning, while participating in school extracurricular activities, or while on any transportation vehicle owned or used by CCSD. Reasonable exceptions are permitted for religious practices and beliefs.
- Clothing and jewelry must not unreasonably disrupt the learning environment. Clothing and jewelry depicting or promoting vulgarity, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, other controlled substances, pornography, nudity, sexual acts, profanity, gang identifiers, and hate speech are prohibited. Any other clothing or jewelry that creates an actual disruption (in the judgment of the principal) is prohibited.
- Hooded shirts/sweatshirts may be worn. The hood must be removed from covering the head during school hours and while on campus. Headwear that obscures a student's face, neck, and ears is prohibited.
- Shorts and skirts must be reasonable in length, appropriate for the school environment, and visible at all times.
- Clothing must completely cover private parts, undergarments, and buttocks. Clothing must completely cover the midriff.
- Strapless garments must be worn with a jacket or similar clothing.
- At the elementary level, we encourage all students to dress in an age appropriate manner.

EARLY CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

- There will be no check-outs after 1:45 p.m. We are beginning our dismissal procedures and will not be able to call your children during this time.
- Check-outs after 11:00 a.m. will count as an absence.
- Academic instruction takes place in all classrooms from 7:35 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Monday – Friday. Please limit check-outs to emergencies only.

FIELD TRIPS

- Field trips must be educational and in accordance with Cherokee County School System Rules and Regulations.
- If you plan to attend a field trip with your child as a chaperone, you will be assigned a few students to be responsible for during the day and must complete a Volunteer Application.
- All chaperones are expected to ride the school bus unless communicated differently by the grade level teachers.
- Any student attending a field trip must submit a signed permission form prior to the morning of the trip.
- Children not enrolled at Ball Ground may not attend field trips.
- If you drive your vehicle to the field trip location, you may check your student out from the field trip location by signing them out on a checkout sheet held by the teacher.
- Preschool children or children from other Ball Ground classes MAY NOT attend field trips with their siblings.
- Field trips are funded by donations from parents for the cost of entrance and bus transportation. If too many parents do not submit payment, the trip may have to be cancelled.

FORGOTTEN ITEMS/DROP-OFF CART

- If your child forgets to bring an item he or she MUST HAVE at school, please drop the item off on the cart near the front entrance. For time sensitive items like lunches or medication, please ring the bell to notify the front office. Otherwise, school staff will be periodically checking for items throughout the day. Keep in mind that this causes a disruption to classroom instruction and should be avoided unless absolutely necessary. We have water fountains and extra snacks for emergencies, so please do not drop these items off if forgotten.

GRADING

- Grading is a matter requiring extreme care. Grades are determined in the best interest of the student after careful evaluation of all factors involved. Initial responsibility for grade determination is given to the teacher. The decision of the teacher is subject to review by the principal. The importance of accurate and fair assessment of student progress cannot be overemphasized. Teachers are encouraged to use a variety of formative and summative assessments for obtaining data that leads to final grades.
- Elementary report cards, describing a student's progress, are sent to parents and/or legal guardians at the end of each nine-week period. Conferences may be scheduled as necessary by contacting the teacher. The purpose of report cards and conferences is to communicate clearly with parents and enlist parental support and help.

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

- The School Board recognizes that homework may be used for preparation, practice and extension of classroom time/concepts and should reflect efforts designed to achieve mastery of the Georgia Standards of Excellence as approved by the State Board of Education. Homework should always relate directly to the curriculum content for the appropriate grade level and to the individual needs of students. The completion of homework enables students to study and organize their time. As students advance through school, it is reasonable to expect that the amount of homework assigned will increase.
- If the homework assigned to students becomes unreasonable/excessive/not meaningful, parents/students should discuss concerns with the teacher. If concerns continue, parents should contact the principal.

LOST & FOUND

- Lost items that cannot be identified are placed in the Lost & Found area in the atrium lobby near the cafeteria and gym. It is the student's responsibility to check Lost & Found. The Lost & Found items are periodically donated to area charities.
- Parents can check Lost & Found for missing items by visiting the ASP desk between 3-6PM.

MAKE-UP WORK

- It is the student's responsibility to ask for all assignments that were missed due to absence from school.
- Make-up work is available to a student when he/she returns to school.
- When a student is absent for two or more days, parents should call for make-up work. Parents should call before 10:00 a.m. and allow 24 hours for work to be ready for pick-up in the office.

MEDIA CENTER

- The facilities of the media center are for use by students and teachers. The media center has an open schedule providing accessibility to all students during the school day. Students are encouraged to read books and use other material available in the media center. Books may be checked out for two weeks. Check out privileges will be suspended when students have an overdue, damaged, or lost book. However, students will be allowed to use materials while they are in the media center.

MEDICATION

- Students should NEVER have access to medication at school unless it is administered through the clinic.
- Any medication administered at school MUST be accompanied by a medication form, which has been completely filled out by the parent or the doctor. Forms are available in the school office. If a student is taking any medications, a note from the parent must be on file. Medications will be secured in the clinic.
- All prescription medicines MUST be in the original container with prescription, pharmacy, doctor and dosages clearly printed on the bottle. We are not allowed to administer any medication without proper directions and procedures. PLEASE ENCOURAGE YOUR PHYSICIAN TO SET THE MEDICATION SCHEDULE AT TIMES THAT WILL ENABLE YOU TO ADMINISTER MEDICATION BEFORE YOUR CHILD LEAVES HOME OR AFTER THEY ARRIVE HOME IN THE EVENING.
- All over-the-counter medications can be administered to your child ONLY if it has been sent from home in the original container along with a completed school medication form. All over-the-counter medications MUST be secured in the clinic and will be administered by trained office personnel or the nurse ONLY. Students who are ill or have a fever should stay home until fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24hours.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

- Unless stated otherwise, all checks should be made payable to Ball Ground STEM Academy. Separate checks should be written for ASP, field trips, and lunch money. Parents are encouraged to visit <https://bges.cherokeek12.net/payments> to pay with VISA, Discover or Master Card credit or debit cards. Our Web Store accepts payments over the internet 24/7.
- Students MAY NOT bring items to school such as video games, toys, etc. If brought, these items will be taken from the child and put in a secure location in the office. These items will not be sent home with the student. Parents will have to come to school to reclaim the item.
- Any student who damages school property or equipment is responsible for retribution equal to the cost to replace or repair the item.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

- Parent volunteers are parents who become involved in the school life by offering their time, services, and resources to benefit the students. Parent volunteers are used in many ways to supplement and enrich the many school programs and activities in the media center, the office and the classrooms. PTA sponsored luncheons, classroom holiday activities, end of year celebrations, etc. are additional volunteer activities. To ensure that parent volunteers provide the greatest level of support possible, it is sometimes necessary for parents to leave preschoolers and younger siblings at home during the instructional school day.

PTA

- We encourage all parents to join PTA. Please visit www.ballgroundpta.org to join, see a calendar of events, reserve one of two spirit rocks, order school spirit wear, and more.
- Stay informed by following BGSA PTA on FB at <https://www.facebook.com/BallGroundPTA>.

SCHOOL DAY

- The instructional day begins at 7:35 a.m. and ends at 2:15 p.m. Students should arrive between 7:00 a.m. and 7:35 a.m. **Please do not bring your child to school before 7:00 a.m. unless your student is attending a teacher supervised club or activity.** Teachers will be on duty to supervise students at 7:00 a.m. for early morning bus duty and breakfast. To avoid being marked Tardy, your child should be in their classroom when the bell rings.

SCHOOL VISITS

- Visitors are always welcome to our school. For the safety of our children, visitors must **always** sign in at the front office first to obtain a **Visitor's Pass**. All visitors are required to wear proper identification and remain in the areas designated for the visit.
- Under no circumstances may a parent or visitor go directly to a classroom without first reporting to the school office.
- Conferences should be arranged in advance and at a time when the teacher does not have a child or children in the classroom and is not on duty elsewhere.
- If you are in our building without a badge, please do not be offended if a staff member questions you and/or asks you to report to the office for a visitor's sticker. Be assured that our motive is merely a shared concern for our children's safety and welfare. Prior arrangements with the teacher **MUST** be coordinated prior to classroom visits. It is imperative that visitors follow directions/requests made by BGSA Staff.

TARDINESS

- It is important that a student arrive at school in time to be **IN CLASS AND READY FOR INSTRUCTION** no later than 7:35 a.m. Students are given instructions and explanations pertaining to the day's activities at that time. If the student arrives in carpool, it is recommended that he/she arrives no later than 7:25 a.m. daily.
- Students arriving after the 7:35 a.m. bell **MUST** report to the office with their parent/guardian to sign-in and receive a tardy slip.
- Students arriving after 11:00 a.m. will be counted as absent.

TEACHER WEBSITES

- Teacher websites can be accessed through CANVAS for all grade levels at <https://myccsd.instructure.com/login/canvas>. Please contact your child's teacher if you need assistance accessing CANVAS.

TRANSPORTATION CHANGE REQUESTS

- Transportation changes for the following day can be made by sending a note in your child's folder or emailing the teacher.
- Transportation changes for the current day must be sent via email to donna.mele@cherokeek12.net **AND** amy.waters@cherokeek12.net **AND** Julia.fowler@cherokeek12.net. If you don't get a response, please call the school at 770-721-5900.
- Please do not request a transportation change after 1:00 p.m.

VIDEOTAPING / NEWSPAPERS / WEB PAGE / SOCIAL MEDIA

- During the school year, your child may be videotaped and/or photographed while participating in various school activities. Pictures may be released to the media throughout the school year. If you do NOT wish for your child's picture to appear in the newspaper, or on a class/school webpage, or for him/her to be videotaped, parents must annually notify the principal in writing by Sept. 1st or within one week of enrollment if enrollment occurs after Sept. 1st.