

# Carolina Elementary School

**Student Handbook  
2024-2025**



*Don't hide that dragon pride!*

**Principal: Kacy Keels**

**Carolina Elementary School**

**719 West Carolina Avenue**

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Dear Carolina Families,

Welcome to the Carolina Elementary School Student Handbook, a vital resource designed to ensure that our school community thrives in a positive, respectful, and safe environment. At Carolina Elementary School, we believe that a structured and supportive atmosphere is essential for academic success and personal growth. This handbook outlines our school's expectations, rules, and procedures that are in place to promote a harmonious learning environment.

Parents and students, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook. By understanding and adhering to our guidelines, you contribute to a respectful and orderly school culture. We appreciate your cooperation and partnership in maintaining a safe and nurturing environment for all students. Thank you for your commitment to upholding our values and expectations. Let's work together to make Carolina Elementary School a place where every student can succeed and feel valued.

Sincerely,

*Kacy Keels*  
CES Principal

### **Carolina Elementary Mission Statement**

**A community of learners dedicated to student achievement.**

### **Carolina Elementary Vision Statements**

- At Carolina Elementary, we envision a school with a warm, safe, and welcoming atmosphere.
- At Carolina Elementary, we envision a school that prepares students for the 21st century by strengthening their skills in the areas of communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.
- At Carolina Elementary, we envision a school where every child makes progress and shows growth in all academic areas.
- At Carolina Elementary, we envision a school where faculty and staff are devoted to the success of all students through meaningful collaboration and ongoing professional development.
- At Carolina Elementary, we envision a school where parents are a vital part of the students' learning and feel welcome to participate in school activities.
- At Carolina Elementary, we envision a school that partners with the community to ensure student success.

### **Carolina Elementary Values**

**At Carolina Elementary, we are...**

- **Respectful**
- **Responsible**
- **Ready**

### **Attendance/Tardies/Early Sign-Outs:**

#### **Daily Attendance:**

All children are expected to be in attendance each day unless they are ill.

Absences are defined as “lawful” or “unlawful.” The district no longer recognizes “excused” or “unexcused” absences.

If a student has more than **TEN** absences in a year long course, the student may lose credit or promotion. It doesn’t matter if the absences are lawful or unlawful: TEN is the limit.

Students must have a doctor or parent note upon returning to school.

Students will be allowed to make-up work they missed during an absence. Upon returning to school, a student will have five days to make up missed work.

All absences require official documentation explaining why the student was absent. This documentation must be turned in within five (5) days of the student’s return to school.

A student may receive four (4) written excused parent notes (PN) per school year. This only applies to the student being ill and unable to attend school. The written parent note must be submitted to the school within five (5) days of the student’s return to school; after five days the parent note will be coded in PowerSchool as an unexcused parent note (UNEPN).

Students at all grade levels must be present *50% of the day* to be counted present for the day.

**Tardies:** The instructional day at Carolina begins at 7:30 AM. **Any student arriving in their classroom after the 7:30 bell is considered tardy.** The student and parent must come into the office to obtain a tardy pass when the student arrives late. The student will not be admitted to class without this pass. **Please do not drop your child off after 7:30 without coming into the office.**

#### **Elementary Tardy Procedures:**

- A letter is mailed home after the 5th tardy.
- A 2nd letter is mailed home after 10 tardies.
- After 15 tardies an Attendance Intervention Plan is developed at an intervention meeting with the CES Attendance Supervisor.

**Early Sign-Outs:** Any student leaving the campus during the school day will need to be signed out in the office. Anyone signing out students must have their name on file in the office and a valid picture I.D. Please do not sign out students unless it is absolutely necessary. Signing out students is a disruption to instruction. **Darlington County School Board policy does not allow students to be signed out from school after 2:00 PM.**

Parents are encouraged to send a note in the AM that they are picking the child up early. Include the date and time of sign out in the note. Students at all grade levels must be present *50% of the day* to be counted present for the day.

**Contact Information:**

Please notify the main office immediately if you have changed your address, home, work, or emergency phone numbers. The school records need to be kept up-to-date. In case of an emergency, we must have a current phone number to contact you. A written note will enable us to update our records.

**Daily Schedule:**

- 7:10 AM - Doors open
- 7:30 AM - Instruction Begins
- 7:31 AM - Tardy Bell
- 2:25 PM - Walkers Dismissed
- 2:30 PM - Car Riders Dismissed

**Discipline:**

Carolina Elementary continues to be a Positive Behavioral and Intervention Supports (PBIS) school. To ensure that our students have a safe, positive learning environment and to provide consistency in all areas of our school, we are proactive in teaching and reinforcing positive behaviors.

As part of our PBIS process, teachers and other staff members use evidence-based practices to increase student learning and decrease classroom disruptions. We use three consistent school expectations:

- Be Responsible
- Be Respectful
- Be Ready

To reinforce these expectations, your child receives “Dragon Dojo Points” that can be “cashed in” for a variety of classroom rewards throughout the school year. Students enjoy working together as a team to earn these incentives.

In an effort to minimize classroom disruptions, we have developed a school-wide system of consequences which also aligns to the goals of PBIS.

- Behavior Note #1=Teacher/School Counselor Conference Referral
- Behavior Note #2=Loss of School Privilege
- Behavior Note #3=Discipline Referral to Administration

Below is a copy of the CES Classroom Behavior Note for your reference.

<b>CES Classroom Behavior Note</b>		Student:	Grade:		
Referring Staff:	Time:	Date:	Location:		
<b>Problem Behavior(s):</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate language <input type="checkbox"/> Physical contact <input type="checkbox"/> Failure to comply <input type="checkbox"/> Disrupting instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Property misuse <input type="checkbox"/> Technology violation <input type="checkbox"/> Harassment/Teasing/Taunting <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Description of Behavior: _____ _____					
<b>Consequences:</b> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1st Strike - Teacher(s)/School Counselor conference with student  <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Strike - Loss of privilege  <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd Strike - Discipline referral sent to administration         </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;">           Parent Contact            Phone Number: _____            Date: _____ Time: _____            Notes: _____            _____            _____         </td> </tr> </table>				<input type="checkbox"/> 1st Strike - Teacher(s)/School Counselor conference with student <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Strike - Loss of privilege <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd Strike - Discipline referral sent to administration	Parent Contact Phone Number: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____ Notes: _____ _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> 1st Strike - Teacher(s)/School Counselor conference with student <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Strike - Loss of privilege <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd Strike - Discipline referral sent to administration	Parent Contact Phone Number: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____ Notes: _____ _____ _____				
Referring Staff Signature: _____		Date: _____			
Parent Signature: _____		Student Signature: _____			

\*White-parent, yellow- teacher, pink- office

The goal of this system is for all involved to be proactive when problem behaviors begin occurring in the classroom. Our proactive approach can help us to put student supports in place and turn these behaviors around before they become major issues that disrupt teaching and learning.

**District-issued iPads:**

Students must follow the iPad rules of the classroom teacher and the school. The student iPad is assigned to the child but it is the property of DCSD.

iPads are to be used as an instructional tool only.

- Students will only use district assigned or approved accounts to access resources.

iPads are to be used appropriately.

- Students cannot take inappropriate pictures or use the internet inappropriately as defined by the Acceptable Use Policy,
- Students can only use the apps or websites that the teacher has given permission to use.
- Students cannot change the iPad settings without permission.
- Students should not add or delete apps without permission.
- Students should not create passwords on the iPad with permission.
- Students should not copy, change, or delete another student’s work.
- Students should let the teacher know immediately if there is a problem with their iPad, no matter how minor.

iPads are to be treated with respect.

- Students should not take the iPad out of the case
- Students should not leave the iPad unattended on the floor.
- Students should not eat or drink while using their iPad.
- Students should notify their teacher immediately if their iPad becomes damaged.

**Dress Code:**

The DCSD dress code is intended to reduce distractions, improve safety, and create a more positive educational climate in schools. DCSD students are expected to dress, be groomed, and otherwise conduct themselves so as not to distract or cause disruption in the educational program or orderly operation of the school.

All students must follow the dress code while attending school, riding buses to and from school, and participating in school functions unless otherwise indicated by the principal.

Dress Code Guidelines:

- Clothing articles, hair, and/or other displays should not be so extreme or inappropriate to the school setting as to disrupt the educational process. Therefore, any items deemed distracting, revealing, overly suggestive, or otherwise disruptive will not be permitted.
- Wearing items that could pose a safety threat to oneself or others is prohibited.
- Attire must not display or evidence membership or affiliation with a “gang” in any negative sense of the term.
- Attire must not display alcoholic beverages, tobacco, controlled drugs or illegal drugs, or paraphernalia associated with the preceding.
- Bandanas and do-rags are not allowed on campus and will be confiscated.
- The wearing of hats and/or sunglasses is not allowed in school buildings.
- Clothing that displays symbols, messages, or statements that distract others, interfere with instructional programs, or otherwise cause disruption is prohibited.
- Appropriate shoes must be worn at all times to ensure safety.
- Lower garments should be of adequate length to assure modesty with the student is seated or engaged in school activities. Shorts and skirts must be long enough to extend below the extended fingertips of the wearer or two inches above the knee. Any slits in the garment must open below the fingertips.
- Pants must be worn at the natural waistline, and undergarments are not to be visible. If they do not fit properly, a belt must be worn to keep them in place.
- Sleeveless attire cannot reveal undergarments. Shirts cannot be tight, low cut, or show cleavage. Tank tops, halter tops, shirts with spaghetti straps or any tops that show midriff will not be allowed. No transparent or mesh clothing will be permitted without an appropriate shirt underneath.
- Leggings or jeggings must have an appropriate shirt or top that covers to the mid-thigh.

Students who are not appropriately dressed will be asked to make necessary changes before returning to class. This may include contacting parents for additional clothing items to be brought to school for the child.

**Personal Electronic Devices:**

S.C. Legislature passed a law (Proviso 1.103), included in the state’s annual budget, to bar students from accessing any electronic communication device, **such as a cellphone or smartwatch, during the entire school day. Beginning August 1, 2024, Darlington County School District (DCSD) will not allow communication devices (cell phones, smart watches, personal tablets) to be accessed by students during the school day.** This does not refer to any devices we distribute to students, such as district-owned MacBooks or iPads.

DCSD is not banning students from bringing their cell phones with them to school. However, students will not be allowed to use or have their cell phone, smart watch, tablet, etc. visible at any time during the school day, including lunchtime and class changes. Devices must remain put away for the entire school day. **This is state law, and there will be disciplinary consequences for breaking this rule.**

Cell phones and smartwatches that are being used to make calls, text (parents or peers), or play games during the day will be confiscated and returned to students at the end of the day.

Cell phones and smartwatches:

- may not be turned on or used during instructional time
- may not be turned on or used during recess or lunch
- may not be turned on or used in the bathroom
- may not be turned on or used during field trips
- may not be turned on or used during state mandated testing

Students are not to call, text, or message their family members during the school day. If students need to reach a member of their family, they can use one of the phones in the main office.

**You can help us enforce this policy by not texting your children and by not calling or answering their calls during the day.**

**Field Trips:**

Educational field trips have been found to be helpful as a learning activity in supporting our school program. Classroom activities are being taught to prepare students for these experiences and these are built on educational purposes and classroom extensions rather than a casual, family outing.

Chaperones will ride on the bus and assist with maintaining order and ensuring that safety rules are enforced. In order to provide adequate supervision, we ask that only appropriate grade level CES students attend the trip.

To be considered as a chaperone, you must be a pre-approved DCSD volunteer.

Only a set number of chaperones will be chosen per trip. This number will depend on the need of the grade level and the location of the trip. Additional parents outside of the selected chaperones will not be permitted to join the CES group at the field trip location.

**Grading Scale:**

The following report card grading scale should be adhered to for all academic subjects:

- A 90 – 100
- B 80 – 89
- C 70 – 79
- D 60 – 69
- F 59 & below

1st and 2nd Grading Scale for Science/Social Studies:

- G - Good (91-100)
- S - Satisfactory (81-90)
- P - Poor (80 or below)

Art, Music, P.E.

- G - Good
- P - Poor
- S - Satisfactory

Category and Weights: Assessments - 35% Class Performance - 40% Mastery Checks -25%

**Guidance:**

Guidance services are available to parents, students, and faculty members within the school setting. The purpose of guidance is to serve as a support and resource service to all Carolina family members. The program includes small/large group and individual counseling. You may contact the school counselor by calling the school office.

**Homework:**

Homework assignments are given to the students for a purpose. Homework is given in order to strengthen skills learned in the classroom and to supplement learning activities. Your child's teacher will communicate to you the homework policy for your child's grade level. All assignments are to be done at home and are expected to be turned in to the teacher.

**Lost and Found:**

The school maintains a lost and found in the cafeteria, where students have easy access to retrieve any lost articles. Parents are urged to put their child's name on all personal items for easy identification.

**Parent/Teacher Communication:**

A Home-School Communication folder will be sent home every Wednesday. It will contain important classroom papers and announcements. After reading the enclosures, please sign the folder and return to your teacher promptly.

Teachers will communicate with parents during the school year as often as possible. These contacts will be made to inform parents of achievements, student improvement, and possible areas of concern. Contacts will be made by phone, letter, conferences, email, School Status

Connect messages, or any combination of these. Parents may request appointments for conferences with teachers and counselors by emailing them. If a concern arises, please make your first contact with the teacher. If this contact is unsatisfactory, then contact the Principal. In most situations a phone call can lead to a resolution regarding a concern more efficiently than email.

Your child's teacher would love to talk to you before school, after school, or during their planning period. Please do not call during school hours and ask to speak to the teacher; this takes instruction time away from your child as well as the other students in their class. We will be happy to take a message and give it to the teacher, or you may email them at any time.

**Parent/Teacher Conferences:**

Please feel free to schedule a conference with your child's teacher at any time. Your teacher will work with you to find a convenient time. Please remember to be prompt. Special arrangements are often made so teachers can meet with parents. When teachers are delayed, student learning may be impacted. Please respect each teacher's time before and after school.

**Prohibited items:**

Students are encouraged to bring only needed items to school. Students may not possess the following items on school property or at school events at any time:

- Gambling devices such as playing cards or dice.
- Drugs, alcoholic beverages, narcotics, tobacco products, cigarette lighters or look-a-likes.
- Explosive devices, including any kind of fireworks.
- Gang paraphernalia, such as rags/bandanas, excessive jewelry, or gang t-shirt colors.
- Weapons or look-a-like weapons, such as guns, knives, screwdrivers, and/or other items designed to inflict/cause physical harm.
- Medication, including over-the-counter items.
- Animals/pets
- Chewing gum
- Toys, laser pointers, scooters, skateboards, footballs, bats, collectible cards and inappropriate magazines.

These items should not be brought to school and will be confiscated by school personnel. Students are also discouraged from bringing any items of a high monetary value to school.

**School Breakfast and Lunch Program:**

School breakfast and lunch are currently free for all children. Please do not send lunch box items that need to be heated.

No outside breakfast is permitted. This is very disruptive as we are preparing to begin our school day.

Fast food lunches are permitted when parents are coming to enjoy lunch in the cafeteria with their child. Otherwise, students should bring their lunchbox or eat cafeteria lunch.

### **School Nurse:**

A school nurse is available on our campus during the week. The nurse's office is for emergency situations and sick students. **If a student must take medication while at school, the parent must bring it to the school nurse along with specific instructions signed by the prescribing physician.** All medications (prescription and over the counter) must be kept in the nurse's office with the order from the physician. Students are not allowed to keep any type of medication with them, including over the counter medications, while at school.

The school nurse (or designee acting in the nurse's absence) may send a student home due to illness and or fever greater than or equal to 100 degrees F.

Symptoms for when a child should remain at home:

- Fever: A child who has had a fever of 100 degrees F or more should stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever has passed without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- Vomiting: Students who have vomited should remain home for at least 24 hours from the last episode and have kept down 2 normal meals.

### **School Volunteers:**

Carolina Elementary School is enriched by the time and dedication of volunteers, parents, grandparents, retirees, military personnel, business professionals, college students, and other community members. We encourage and need volunteers in order to be a successful school. Your interest and involvement is always welcomed and appreciated.

Keeping our students, faculty, and staff safe is a top priority. To help ensure this safety, background screens for volunteers are a necessity. The district has contracted with BIB to conduct high quality background checks on our potential volunteers.

[Click here](#) to complete the background check process.

### **Student Internet Use Agreement:**

The district is monitoring all student activity on the Internet while using DCSDNet. If any violations are committed, access privileges may be revoked for the remainder of the year. School disciplinary and/or appropriate legal action may be taken.

### **Textbooks:**

Textbooks are issued at no charge to students, but if they are lost or damaged, **parents must pay for their replacement.**

### **Transportation:**

In our ongoing efforts to enhance your children's safety, we use the PikMyKid Dismissal Application. The unique features of PikMyKid allow you, as parents, to easily change pick up modes, quickly delegate to an alternate individual for pickup, and even schedule for future pickup mode, pickup individual, and after school programs.

Follow these steps:

- Download the **PikMyKid app**.
- Your child will receive a PikMyKid Car Tag at Meet and Greet or after the first day of school. As you register in the App, use this number.
- You will be the Primary Parent for your child and in control of their dismissal. You can delegate alternate individuals, but they should have the App also as it will send a matching number to the phone for us to validate the correct person is picking up the proper child.
- If you are part of a car pool, each child's number will be sent to the phone for validation.
- You will be asked for the necessary information (Child Name, Grade, Teacher, Dismissal Mode, & Car Tag Number) upon registration.
- You will be notified when the app goes live.
- Please place the PikMyKid Car Tag in your window.

### **Car Riders-**

1. Students may not be dropped off before 7:10 AM due to lack of adult supervision prior to this time. The drop off line will close at 7:30 AM to allow students enough time to make it to their classroom before the tardy bell rings. The tardy bell rings at 7:31 AM.
2. All students must be picked up by 2:50 PM. There is no supervision for students after this time.
3. All cars delivering or picking up students at school should go to the end of the fence running along 11th Street, turn right and proceed on the paved drive beside the green fence.
4. All students will be given a PikMyKid Car Tag for dismissal. For the safety of your child and to aid our faculty in loading students quickly in the afternoon, make your PikMyKid Car Tag visible daily for afternoon car pick-up. All students are given one complimentary PikMyKid Car Tag. If you need additional car tags the cost will be \$3.00. Please check with Mrs. Norwood in the front office if you would like to purchase one. **If you do not have a PikMyKid Car Tag you will need to stop by the front office to receive a temporary tag for the day. For safety purposes, students will not be released without a Car Tag.**
5. Please drive slowly and refrain from using your cell phone.
6. Students will load/unload at the shelter area. **AM car riders are not to be dropped off in the front of the building in the morning. This area is for buses only.**

### **Bus Riders-**

1. Buses load/unload in the circular driveway in front of the school.
2. School bus transportation is a privilege that may be withdrawn at any time for inappropriate behavior. If discipline problems occur on the bus, the driver will complete a disciplinary report and submit it to the school for appropriate action. We will send a copy of the report to the parents. If the problem persists, students may be suspended from riding a bus.

### **Walkers/Bike Riders-**

1. AM Walkers/Bike Riders should walk/bike directly to school. Crossing guards are located on Carolina Avenue and the corner of Marlboro and 11th Street to help students safely cross the road if necessary. Bike riders should park their bike on the bike pad that is located on the playground and then report directly to their classroom.

2. PM Walkers/Bike Riders will be dismissed at 2:25 PM and escorted by faculty/staff members to the crossing guards on Carolina Avenue or the corner of Marlboro and 11th Street so they can assist students in safely crossing the road if necessary.

**\*Please note that students should be walking or biking to the address indicated on their transportation form. Students should NOT be picked up in a vehicle if they are a walker.**

**\*Walking/Biking to school is a privilege that may be revoked if a student is found to be participating in inappropriate behavior that is deemed unsafe.**

***Transportation Changes:***

As a safety measure, we must have a note that is signed and dated by the parent in order to change how a student is to leave school. Transportation changes will not be accepted over the phone. No exceptions!

***Visiting Carolina Elementary:***

You are welcome and encouraged to visit our school for conferences, and/or for volunteer work. Conferences are not allowed during instructional time. Please contact your child's teacher to make an appointment for a conference.

**[Click Here](#) for more information on Darlington County School District's Behavioral Guidelines and Student Code of Conduct Policies.**