



Thomson Estates Elementary School

203 East Thomson Drive

Elkton, MD 21921

(410) 996-5080

(410) 996-5272 (fax)

Parent-Student Handbook

2024-2025

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This handbook will provide you with information on school policies and procedures. Our policies are developed in alignment with that of the Board of Education of Cecil County Public Schools and will be updated at any time to reflect current changes in district policy. Be sure to use this as a handy reference throughout the school year.

We want our students to find Thomson Estates a great place for learning, growing, laughing, and making friends. Parents and guardians are our very important partners! We want you to feel welcomed and to be involved. Together, we can make certain that all of our children experience success in school.

If you have any questions or concerns about this document, or if anything occurs during the year, please do not hesitate to contact us. You may reach us at the school number or our emails listed below.

Mrs. Meghan Brown
Principal
mebrown@ccps.org

Mrs. Amber Ashebu
Assistant Principal
asashebu@ccps.org

School Hours from Prekindergarten to Grade 5:

Activity	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Arrival & Breakfast	8:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m.
Instruction Begins	9:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.
Dismissal	3:30 p.m.	3:30 p.m.	1:45 p.m.	3:30 p.m.	3:30 p.m.

Doors will open at 8:45 a.m. daily. All students will receive a free breakfast when they enter the building. Please plan to arrive so that your child has entered the building, collects a breakfast, and enters the classroom no later than 9:00 a.m. each morning. Prompt arrival sets the tone for a positive day for all.

Teacher Hours:

8:15 a.m. – 3:45 p.m. daily. If you need to **contact your child's teacher** you are welcome to use phone or email. We encourage regular communication in order to build positive relationships and to solve classroom problems quickly and with the person in charge of the classroom structure. Please realize that when students are in the building, the students are the teacher's first priority. Emails and phone calls will be returned during planning times, not during instructional times. While your communication is important to us, please realize that due to their busy schedule, teachers may take up to 24 hours to respond to an email or text. In addition, teachers are not obligated to respond to emails in the evenings or on weekends.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL:

BUS RIDERS:

Providing safe and efficient school bus transportation for our students requires the cooperation of everyone—students, parents, bus drivers, and school staff. The Cecil County Public Schools Department of Transportation has published a document titled, "**Parent Guide for Student Transportation**" that you can find on the CCPS site (www.ccps.org). It is recommended that you read this document and discuss its contents with your child/children. Students should arrive at the bus stop in the morning 15 minutes in advance of their scheduled bus pick up time.

The school bus driver is expected to enforce the regulations of student behavior while students board, ride, and depart from the bus. The driver, in coordination with school administrators, may revoke the student's bus riding privileges for failure to obey the rules.

.Please note the following quoted directly from the student transportation guide:

- **"AT THE END OF THE DAY**, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students will be let off along with other students at their stop. However, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students getting off alone at a stop will be let off the bus only under appropriate supervision which is a responsible adult or older sibling."
- Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes before the student's scheduled bus drop off time.

When a school bus is stopped to load or unload students and the bus lights are flashing, it is illegal to pass the school bus. This law also applies when the bus is in the loading zone at school.

The school bus driver is expected to load and unload students at the assigned bus stop. Students need to be at the assigned bus stop 10 minutes before the assigned time. If students miss the bus, please take them directly to school. **Please be advised that students may not ride a different bus for visitation/playtime with another student after school. Requests for a change in bus assignments will be granted only for day care or emergency needs.**

SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS:

Notes to the teacher/ office are requested for the following instances:

1. When you or someone else will be picking up your child from school.
2. When your child is to stay after school.
3. When your child is to ride the bus to another established stop (emergency purposes only).

If a student is not riding a bus home, the person picking up the student will go through the car rider loop to pick up the student with a note to the office. Anyone not known by the staff will be required to show photo identification (driver's license). A minor may not come to the school for the purpose of signing out or picking up a student for dismissal. The parent or legal guardian will be contacted if the student will be going home in a manner different from the typical way or with someone who is not the legal parent or guardian if a note has not been sent to the office via the student. A phone call will be made from the main office staff to the parent to verify the note. Thank you for understanding that this procedure is meant to ensure the safety and welfare of your child.

CAR RIDERS:

Parents/guardians choosing to transport their children both to and from school should enter the car loop and park on the left next to the curb. In the mornings, doors to the building are not open to students until 8:45 AM. **Please do not release your child from your car until these doors are opened and staff members are present. The school will not be responsible for any student dropped off at the curb without an adult family member present.** At 9:00 a.m. the doors will close and a responsible adult will need to report to the main office to sign-in students.

At 3:30 p.m., afternoon dismissal will begin. **Cars will enter from Courtney Dr. and exit on to East Thomson Dr.** Car riders will be dismissed to the side entrance of the school. Car rider loop ends when the car line is cleared. Please plan to arrive on time for dismissal. When all cars clear, remaining students will be taken to the main office and parents will need to go to the main office to pick up their student(s). When waiting in the car rider line, be sure not to block driveways in the community.

WALKERS:

Many of our students walk or ride a bike to school. Be sure that your child comes directly to school in the morning and goes directly home after school. Please stress the importance of not talking to strangers or entering automobiles, and remind your students not to go to a friend's house after school without your permission. Urge your child to walk on the sidewalk. Where there is no sidewalk, teach your children to walk on the left side of the road, facing oncoming traffic. Discuss the dangers resulting from throwing objects such as stones or snowballs. Crossing guards are employed by the town of Elkton and provide assistance to students when crossing the streets near our school. **Those students who ride a bike or scooter to school should walk them while on school property and lock them to the bike rack.** Ultimately, it is our goal for all students to come to school and return home safely. ***At 9:00am, the doors will close, and your child will need to get into school through the main office.*** Please note that walkers will be dismissed at 3:30 p.m. daily.

ALTERED DISMISSALS:

If you are going to pick up your child from school on an infrequent basis, please send a note to school requesting that he/she be a car rider that day and be sent to the car loop at dismissal. Should you decide to pick up your child at dismissal and have not notified the school, you will need to come to the office to sign out your child, and your child will be dismissed to the office when the walkers are dismissed. If your child is being picked up by someone other than a parent or legal guardian, ***this person must be listed on the emergency card and have proof of identification. In addition, a note or phone call from the parent or legal guardian is required in order to make this change. This note should be sent in with the child for the office to verify during the school day. If this is not possible, a staff member MUST contact a parent or guardian at a phone number on file in order to dismiss the student.*** This process takes time and is in place to make sure your child is safe.

Please be patient if this process takes time. Calls will be made after dismissal is completed in order for all students to be dismissed to their regular mode of transportation on time.

RESTRICTED DISMISSAL/CUSTODY:

In divorce or separation situations, there are often restrictions placed upon parties by the court custody decrees. If there are special considerations regarding your child, **you must provide copies of court documents to our office.** If there are changes in these arrangements/documents, please send new copies as soon as possible. We cannot enforce any new paperwork until we have a copy at school, so providing us with a copy quickly is essential.

Students with restricted custody arrangements will not be released to anyone other than the authorized person(s) named in the office records. For your child's safety, all children must be signed-out in the office if they leave school before the end of the regular school day. **Please be aware that the school cannot legally restrict a non-custodial parent from picking up his/her child unless custody papers are on file in the school office.** It is the family's responsibility to provide the school with updated court orders as soon as possible. Also, for the protection of you and your child, the office staff may request picture identification before releasing any child from school.

EARLY DISMISSALS:

If there is a need to release your child from school early, **please send a note to school that morning** with your child stating the time and reason for early dismissal. In the event of a rare emergency, you may sign your child out and present the note at the time of dismissal.

When you come to pick up your child, always report to the school office. There, you will need to sign out your child, and perhaps sign him/her back into school if he/she is returning for the remainder of the day. Teachers have been instructed not to release students without notification from the office. This is for your child's protection.

Children should not be picked up at school after 3:15 PM and prior to the 3:30 PM dismissal unless there is an emergency. This procedure is designed to prevent disruptions to the classroom at the end of the day. Many teachers are assigning homework, summarizing lessons, and organizing for dismissal. Children leaving early miss homework assignments and other important information summarized at the end of the day. All parents/guardians picking up students should be prepared to show picture identification.

No student will be called from the classroom during these times:

3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Wednesday

ATTENDANCE:

Good attendance promotes achievement, and attendance habits learned in school generally remain with the student as he/she enters the world of work. Please refer to the [CCPS Student Handbook](#) on the CCPS website for specific attendance information and requirements.

BIRTHDAYS / CELEBRATIONS / REWARDS:

Food may not be brought into the school for classroom birthday celebrations. Non-food rewards promote a healthier school environment by not linking rewards to food consumption. Food becomes a primary motivator for students when they are given soda, cupcakes, candy, and other sweets as a reward for good behavior, academic achievement, or as part of a celebration (for example – birthdays). Because these foods have little nutritional value, using them as rewards/celebrations contribute to poor eating habits (encourages over consumption of "empty calorie" foods and increases the preference for sweets).

Our staff members are moving toward non food related rewards, including such ideas as providing extra recess or physical activity, extra reading time, extra art time, dancing to music, game time, etc. If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday or other special occasion, please choose a non-food related trinket such as: stickers, bookmarks, books, activity or game sheets, pencils, markers or other small trinkets.

We all love to celebrate accomplishments and special days. Our challenge is to design healthy celebrations. We ask that you and your child take the challenge with us. The next time you are planning a celebration (birthday, etc.), work with your child and your child's teacher to design an activity or event that will promote a healthy response and lifestyle. If your child is interested in sharing items with their classmates, you may want to think about:

- *Donating a read-aloud book for the class in your child's name
- *Sharing photos of their life
- *Creating a craft item
- *Donating a game (either a board game for rainy day recess or a physical game – jump ropes, soft Frisbees).

Research clearly demonstrates that healthy children learn better. To provide the best possible learning environment for our children, we must provide an environment that supports healthy behaviors. When appropriate to bring in food or drink, such items must be store purchased, unopened, and have an ingredients label. We ask that we work as partners in this endeavor – for our children's sake.

Thomson Estates will be celebrating the birthdays of students once a month with a small gift and a cafeteria snack ticket. All cafeteria snacks comply with federal healthy snack guidelines.

BUSINESS PARTNERS:

Thomson Estates proudly continues its longstanding business partnership with **Aberdeen Proving Ground Federal Credit Union**. This partnership includes several initiatives focused on the students and our school community. APGFCU will be engaging our community in financial planning and education. APGFCU financially supported our students with the generous purchase of yoga mats for all students and by sponsoring part of the AVID conference this summer. Twenty (20) staff members attended the AVID conference which will help us bring high quality instruction throughout the school. We are certainly excited about this partnership.

We are also delighted to continue our relationship with both the **Elkton United Methodist Church** and **Wright's AME Church**. Both churches help in a variety of ways including mentoring students and supporting teachers. Our students benefit academically through these collaborations.

Thomson Estates Elementary also enjoys an exciting collaboration with the **University of Maryland Extension**. Experts from the extension office help students and staff learn about healthy eating habits by teaching lessons, helping us maintain our school garden, and sponsoring fresh fruit and vegetable tastings in collaboration with the Thomson Estates Food and Nutrition Department. Students who visit the garden especially love eating the cherry tomatoes when they are ripe!

CAFETERIA:

The federal government, Maryland Meals for Achievement, will continue to provide a free breakfast and lunch daily to all students. Eating breakfast and lunch daily makes a significant contribution to ensuring that students get the most out of every school day. The fact is, hungry children cannot learn. A monthly menu of breakfasts and lunches is printed and sent home with the children. Breakfast will be eaten in the classrooms each day, and students eat in their classrooms.

Families **are strongly encouraged** to complete the federally sponsored free and/or reduced lunch program application (<https://www.myschoolapps.com/Application>). It is important for all of our families to fill out these applications for many reasons including: (1) allows TEES to serve free breakfast and lunch to all students daily, (2) allows eligible families to continue to receive P-EBT benefit cards, and (3) allows TEES to retain its Title 1 funding to support our educational and family involvement programs.

The school lunch menu can be found online at www.ccps.org under Departments, and then click on Food Services. Families may still place money on their children's lunch accounts. These funds can be used to purchase snacks. **School Cash Online** is an easy to use way to pay for your child's school snacks. **Payments can be made at** <https://ccps.schoolcashionline.com/>

As in previous years, students will be using a PIN system to be identified as they purchase their lunches in the cafeteria. The PIN will be the student's ID number. **Please note that the school does not lend money.** Our cafeteria has its own phone number. The phone number is 410-996-5083.

CAR LOOP:

Providing safe and efficient arrival and dismissal procedures for our students requires the cooperation of everyone—students, parents/guardians, and school staff. Thomson Estates Elementary School will continue with the car rider procedures that were followed last year. **Students will be dismissed from the car rider loop at 3:30 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and at 1:45 on Wednesday.** The car rider loop is available for students who will **be picked up every day or the same day each week.** You should have received a letter regarding our car rider loop expectations on the first day of school. Please fill out the "Car Rider Car Application" that was attached to the letter and *send it back* with your child *as soon as possible*. Bringing in this will ensure our students' safety and that our car rider dismissal is as efficient as possible. If you pick up your child occasionally or have a need to pick your child up from school before 3:15pm, please park in the parking lot and continue to use the sign-out sheet in the main office. Safety of our children is our number one responsibility. Please see the Car Rider Loop Addendum at the end of this document for detailed procedural information for the car loop.

CAR RIDER LOOP EXPECTATIONS:

Please share these expectations with anyone who drops off and/or picks up your child(ren):

Morning

- Students will be able to enter the building, through the side doors, beginning at 8:45 a.m. Thomson Estates staff members will stand at the entrance of the school and in the commons area to assure students enter the building safely. Please **DO NOT** let students out of the car before 8:45 a.m., and until you see a staff member at the car loop doors.
- All students will unload several cars at a time at the designated drop-off area. All students are expected to unload on the left side of the vehicle for safety reasons.
- Parents are expected to remain in a single file line. **DO NOT** get out of your vehicle. Staff will load and unload students. Please **DO NOT** pass each other to leave the lot. One moment of patience could save an unnecessary injury.
- Students arriving at school at 9:00 a.m. or later must be accompanied to the office by an adult and signed in.
- For safety reasons, parents are expected to stay in their cars during drop off.

Dismissal

- At 3:20 p.m. a staff member will collect the car order for the day based on how transportation has arrived to the building. This information will be shared by google doc so that the names are arranged in numerical order of arrival.
- Car riders will be alerted to dismissal first: (3:30 p.m. on M, T, Th, F and 1:45 p.m. on Wednesday). Car riders will remain in their classrooms (or designated grade level area) until their number is called.

- Students are expected to remain inside the car rider door and in the designated area until the staff members in charge tell them to go to their car. Students will come out in a single line and be escorted to the beginning of the car-rider line by the lamp post. As soon as your child(ren) is in the car, please move on so we can keep the car loop moving.
- Parents are expected to remain in a single file line. Please **DO NOT** pass each other to leave the lot. One moment of patience could save an unnecessary injury.
- Students should enter the car from the sidewalk to avoid the possibility of students walking in the road. Parents of older students should remain in their vehicle and begin moving after their child has fastened his or her seat belt. Please be patient with parents of younger students who may need to exit their vehicle in order to secure their children into car seats before moving. Otherwise for safety reasons, parents are expected to stay in their cars.
- **Car Rider Cards-Each car rider will be issued 4 numbered cards to be placed on the dashboard of the pick-up vehicles. These cards are only to be used by people that are listed on your emergency contact list in the main office. Please remember that photo identification is required for student pickup.**

Your child/children's safety is our number one concern, and we appreciate your cooperation and patience!

CRISIS EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM:

Every school in Cecil County has a Crisis Emergency Response Team (CERT) made up of school administrators, teachers, secretaries, a custodian, the school nurse, and support staff. It is the responsibility of this team to develop our Crisis Emergency Response Plan. Although one plan cannot provide for every imaginable emergency, our CERT works with our school system and other county emergency response agencies to provide for the safety and well being of all of our students. Several times throughout the year, we have practice drills to test our plan and revise it as needed. During these drills, your phone calls may go unanswered and you may not have access to the building. Thank you for your understanding as we provide for a safe school environment.

CONFERENCES:

If at any time during the school year you wish to talk with your child's teacher, please contact the teacher to set up an appointment. Please realize that when teachers are not on planning, they are not available to speak to parents on the phone. Parent involvement is very important so even if a face-to-face conference is not possible, please call, email, or send a note or letter. Regular communication helps to build and maintain a strong family-school relationship.

DETENTION:

Should it be necessary to ask your child to stay after school for the benefit of completing work or discussing a behavioral issue that occurred, personnel from Thomson Estates will notify you and obtain your permission to keep your child after school hours. Transportation home will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian. Families are encouraged to arrange for a parent conference, if needed.

DISCIPLINE:

In order to provide your child with the best possible learning environment, it is essential to maintain proper discipline. Thomson Estates Elementary School will continue its school wide behavior support program called PBIS (Positive Behavioral, Intervention and Supports). What is PBIS?

PBIS targets improving student academic and behavior outcomes by ensuring all students have access to the most effective and accurately implemented instructional and behavioral practices and interventions possible. PBIS provides an operational framework for achieving these outcomes. More importantly, PBIS is NOT a curriculum, intervention, or practice, but IS a decision making framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important

academic and behavior outcomes for all students. We encourage you to try PBIS at home to positively reinforce Respect, Responsibility, and Safety so your child can earn incentives at school.

Information about discipline policies and procedures can be found in the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#) that is published each year by Cecil County Public Schools. These handbooks are sent home with each student at the beginning of the school year and contain a wealth of information regarding policies and practices. Please take the time to review carefully the **Student Code of Conduct**. The Code of Conduct will address student behavior and policies that are associated with such behavior. **Please complete and return the page in the Handbook that indicates you have read and understand the student Rights and the Code of Conduct.** It is hoped that with the home and school working together, discipline issues can be solved before they become too serious.

DRESS CODE:

"Cecil County Public Schools seeks to promote good citizenship, to provide a safe and comfortable environment conducive to learning, and to prepare students for adult professional life. Certain clothing types and styles are deemed not appropriate as school-day attire and in addition may present an unhealthy situation. Appropriate dress is expected of all students. The responsibility for appropriate student dress resides with the student and his/her parents or guardians within approved standards set by the Board of Education and the schools." – *from the Board of Education Dress Code Policy.*

For safety reasons, Thomson Estates students are not permitted to wear flip flops, slides, or shoes with wheels. If a student comes to school with shoes that are not safe, he/she will not be able to participate in recess or physical education classes. **Revealing clothing or clothing with inappropriate slogans will also not be permitted. It is strongly advised that fad items be kept at home and not brought to school.**

DROPPING OFF & PICKING UP OF STUDENTS:

When dropping off or picking up students outside of arrival and dismissal times, please park your vehicle in the front lot and walk your student into the building. We kindly ask that you do not park along the fire lane, especially nearing dismissal time. **Please note, an adult must sign-in tardy student(s) on the appropriate student log.** For security reasons, all students and visitors must enter the building through the main entrance.

On the occasion that someone else will be picking up your child from school, it is important that that person's name be on the office information card as being allowed to fulfill that purpose. It is also important that you notify the office in writing in advance as to who will be picking up your child and at what time you anticipate this to occur. We ask this because it is important that we know you are aware of whom we are releasing your child. If the office has not been notified of this change in advance, contact with the parent or legal guardian **must** be made prior to releasing the student. In an effort to minimize classroom interruptions, parents that come to pick up their child will be asked to wait in the vestibule. Your child will be called from the classroom to the office.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

It is important that we can contact parents or other authorized persons in case of an emergency. Please be sure we have the latest telephone numbers for you and those you have listed on the office information card. We ask that you come in to make any necessary changes in person so that we can ensure the changes are being made by a legal parent or guardian. A copy of the current card on file will be sent home with each student to be updated yearly.

FIELD TRIPS:

We recognize that there are many valuable learning experiences beyond our school walls. Our teachers plan field trips that are integrated with their classroom lessons. A parent's written permission is required for a child to participate. If a parent does not give consent, arrangements will be made for the child to stay in school

with another class for the day. ***If a parent does not give consent for the trip and keeps the child home from school, it will be considered an unexcused absence and will count against the 17 total number of absences.*** Often students are charged a fee to help cover the cost of the transportation or admission. No child will be left behind due to the cost of the trip. The school will exercise care in travel arrangements, but it cannot be held responsible for circumstances beyond its control.

For the safety and security of our students and teachers, all parents and guardians who wish to be considered for a field trip chaperone must meet two requirements. First, all chaperones will be checked against the sex offender registry prior to their participation on the trip. Second, all parent chaperones must participate in a mandatory reporter training which explains what chaperones are expected to do if a student discloses an incidence of abuse or neglect. Two sessions of mandatory reporter training will be scheduled early in the school year and will cover adults for consideration for the entire year. Completion of this process does not guarantee that an adult will be able to chaperone multiple trips since we strive to have all eligible parents have an opportunity to participate in a field trip with their student. This pool of all available chaperones will be provided to grade level teams.

HEALTH PROGRAM:

A registered nurse serves on a full-time basis as a resource for teachers, parents, and students. In the event that a student is too ill to remain in the classroom, he/she will be sent to the health room. The nurse or one of the secretaries will talk to the child, and if needed, take the child's temperature. In the event of a serious injury, a persistent illness, or an elevated temperature, the nurse or secretary will contact the parent by phone. A child who has had a **fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or an asthma attack** in the past 24 hours is best cared for at home. If a child begins to develop symptoms alerting to a possible Covid-19 illness will be quarantined in the nurse area until the parent comes to pick up the student. The nurse will work with the family to determine any quarantine/testing requirements before the student may return to the building.

Periodically, the nurse checks the physical well-being of students, recording the condition of his/her eyes, vision, hearing, scalp, skin, and teeth. Concerns found during these screenings are reported to the parents. If you are financially unable to provide adequate medical treatment, call the nurse or the school office and you will be referred to the proper clinic or agency.

MEDICATIONS:

The Cecil County Board of Education's medicine policy states that the school must have a form completed by the doctor for any medication to be dispensed at school; **this includes both prescription and non-prescription medication**. All medication must be stored in the school office or health room and be taken in the presence of school officials. **Medications must be brought to the nurse by an adult. Never send medications to school with a student.** Copies of this policy will be sent home with students during the first week of school. Medication forms are available in the school office. The entire Medication Regulation is available upon request or on our website at www.ccps.org.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

If certain infectious diseases are discovered, a student may be sent home so that proper medical treatment can be obtained as soon as possible and for the protection of other students and staff.

- **IMPETIGO:** If the area is properly treated and covered, the student may remain in the building provided a note from the doctor is brought to school.
- **CONJUNCTIVITIS (PINK EYE):** students are excluded from school until eyes are clear or a note is brought in from the doctor stating that the condition is no longer infectious.
- **RINGWORM OF SCALP:** If the area is properly treated, the student may remain in school with a note from the doctor saying that the condition is no longer infectious.
- **HEAD LICE:** The student's head must be thoroughly cleansed with a special shampoo designed to kill the lice. All other family members should be examined and treated if necessary. Clothing, towels, and bed linens used by the infected person must be washed in **HOT** water. The child must be free of both

lice and nits before returning to school. The infected student must be treated a second time, 7-10 days after the first treatment.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT Team (FIT):

The Family Involvement Team (FIT) provides parents and teachers with ways to share their experiences and knowledge about children. FIC members will continue to support public education and work to improve children's health and safety. The Family Involvement Committee will speak on behalf of the children to affect change. They will be an integral part of our students' success at TEES.

HOMEWORK:

Most students will have homework each night designed to reinforce concepts taught in class. Parents should try to provide a quiet place to study and encourage completion of the assignment. Please do not do your child's homework. It is a review of the work introduced in class. Help should only be given when necessary. If your child is having great difficulty on homework, please write a note to the teacher to make him or her aware so proper support can be provided. Homework will *not* be given over breaks or during holidays as Thomson Estates values quality time spent with family.

INTRAMURAL MUSIC:

Students beginning in 4th grade will have the opportunity to join extracurricular music groups such as band, chorus, and orchestra. It is expected that students keep up with their schoolwork since practices can occur over instructional time.

JUDY CENTER PARTNERSHIP:

The Cecil County Judy Center Partnership is a comprehensive, community-based program that offers a full range of services to children from birth through 5 years of age and their families. Judy Center programs and events include, but are not limited to: play group, literacy-on-the-go, Stop & Shop, community events, summer learning programs, and school tours. You may contact the Judy Center staff members (Lynn Dech and/or Katie Valetutti, service coordinators), by calling the school. The Judy Center website is:

www.ceciljudycenter.org .

MAKE-UP WORK, LATE WORK AND RETAKES:

Throughout the school year, circumstances will arise in which students need the opportunity to complete missing work or retake assignments/assessments.

Make-up Work

- Regardless of the absence code, a minimum of 5 class days will be allowed for each day of absence for the completion of make-up work. During this allotted time, teachers will provide any practice opportunities and scored assignments missed by the students. Practice opportunities can occur at school or home. Scored assignments must be given at school, graded, and entered into the PowerSchool grade book. There is no academic penalty for scored assignments completed as make-up work and students will be given full credit for the scores earned.
- If scored assignments are to be given beyond a time teachers deem as too far from the classroom instruction (similar to the idea of not giving a retake beyond 10 school days), these assignments can be exempted.
- If the absence(s) occur at the end of the marking period, a grade of incomplete may be issued.
- Teachers must allow and grade late scored assignments.
- Late work may be a sign that an English Learner needs more support to be able to access the content, understand the directions, and/or complete the task.

Late Work

- Regardless of reason, teachers must allow and grade late assignments. A minimum of two class days will be allowed for a late assignment with an academic penalty of not greater than five percent per late day of the assignment's total grade. If the assignment is turned in beyond the allotted number of days, the assignment will be graded based upon the late work policy of the teacher. This policy will be outlined in the teachers' grading criteria and approved by the school principal.
- Work due the day of an absence is due on the day the student returns to that class.

Retakes

Students will be given the opportunity to complete retakes on both summative and formative assessments. Retakes may be completed on all assessments that earn less than a 75% and students will be provided the opportunity to retake the assessment during the school day or at a mutually agreeable time.

The criteria below are minimum expectations; teachers are welcome to make decisions that support student achievement.

The retake assessments must be graded and recorded in the teacher's grade book and be in accordance with the following criteria:

- The retake assessment can be any of the following:
 - The same assessment, a comparable assessment, and/or assessment corrections. (Refer to Instructional Coordinator for specific expectations.)
- Students can retake assessments once if they have earned less than a 75%.
- If a student retakes an assessment, the highest grade he/she can earn is a 75%.
- Students will receive the higher grade not to exceed 75%.
- Students will retake the assessment within ten (10) school days after the initial assessment has been graded and returned.
- Students will retake the assessment at a mutually agreeable time.

Students should be encouraged to take full advantage of opportunities to demonstrate their mastery of content by completing all assignments and retaking assignments where necessary.

MEDIA CENTER:

Our school media specialist is Mrs. Baldino. Students attend regularly scheduled media classes on a weekly basis. Selected books and materials may be borrowed from the media center. It is the responsibility of the students to care for the books and materials while they are signed out, and to return them when they are due. Please help your child (ren) with this responsibility.

'OPERATION FILL THE PANTRY': Food and Supply Pantry:

Thomson Estates Elementary, in partnership with 'Operation Fill the Pantry' (supported by employees of Cecil County Department of Emergency services) supports families in need by providing necessary items, such as: toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, soap, body wash, shampoo and conditioner, brushes and combs, feminine hygiene products, and deodorant. Socks, underwear, gloves, and hats may also be available during the winter months. Non-perishable food items are also available. Any interested family may contact a school administrator, office staff member, or Judy Center staff member. Your use of the Pantry is completely private.

PARENT/GUARDIAN PARTICIPATION:

We encourage all parents/guardians to take an active part in their child's education. Your child's education is enhanced by parental participation.

- Talk with your child each day about what is happening in his/her classes.

- Look over and help with homework assignments, but always encourage independence.
- Read with your child every day.
- Read our school newsletters and respond to questionnaires and surveys.
- Become an active member of our Family Involvement Team.
- Attend conferences and meetings.
- Become a member of the School Improvement Team.
- Chaperone class trips and attend school performances.
- Join our volunteer/mentor program.

We welcome and encourage parent involvement, participation and partnerships. Please consider becoming an active part of your school community. Children benefit from a strong home, school connection.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

We are excited to announce that Thomson Estates Elementary has a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The PTO will have monthly meetings to solicit family input on ways to enrich student educational and family engagement experiences. Look for more information at Open House and in the PTO Newsletter. A special thanks to Nicole Kirby and Allison Weber for their leadership!

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/ PHYSICAL WELLNESS & HEALTH:

Students in grades PreK through 5 are scheduled for at least one period of physical education and one period of physical wellness & health each week. In addition, each child will have directed play time with his/her classroom teacher each day (except Wednesday and the day he/she has a class with the P.E. or the P.W.H. teacher). Parent cooperation is requested concerning the student's dress for P.E. / P.W.H. class. It is the student's responsibility to wear sneakers and appropriate clothing on the day(s) he/she has P.E. / P.W.H. class.

SEARCH and SEIZURE (from the CCPS Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook):

Authority to search a student:

A principal, assistant principal, or principal's designee (teacher-in-charge or teacher on school sponsored activity if no principal or assistant principal is available) may make a reasonable search of a student on the school premises or on a school sponsored activity if there is a reasonable belief that the student has in his or her possession an item, the possession of which is a criminal offense by the laws of this state, or a violation of any other state law, or rule or regulation of the Board of Education. All student searches will be in the presence of a third party.

AUTHORITY TO SEARCH THE SCHOOL:

A principal or assistant principal of a public school may make a search of the physical plant of the school and its building/grounds including the lockers of students. The right of the school official to search grounds, buildings, and lockers is hereby published in this writing. With reasonable suspicion, a school principal or assistant principal may search an automobile on school property. All searches must be in accordance with current state and federal regulations and occur in the presence of a third party.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR SERVICES:

We have one full time school counselor at Thomson Estates Elementary School. Our counseling program provides services to all students, teachers, and families. Services include classroom lessons, small group counseling, consultation, peer mediation, and parent education. This program will focus on enhancing self-esteem, facilitating academic growth and development, and developing interpersonal skills. Our program offers preventative and crisis intervention to all students. Feel free to contact the school via phone or email the school counselor at any time.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM:

The School Improvement Team (SIT) exists to promote continuous improvement of the instructional program at Thomson Estates. SIC consists of staff members and parents who meet several times a year to analyze data and make important decisions about our instructional program. **Any parent/guardian wishing to participate should contact Mrs. Meghan Brown, Principal, at mebrown@ccps.org.**

SOCIAL MEDIA:

As a part of the CCPS Strategic Plan, Thomson Estates Elementary School is working to increase our communication to families in order to keep families connected to their students' educational day. We will be actively using our Facebook and Instagram pages regularly. Check them regularly because you just may see some of your favorite children as they go about their daily business at school! We will also use this as one part of our communication plan to keep families informed with up-to-date information about Thomson Estates.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND CARE OF PROPERTY:

Part of the learning process is to develop individual responsibility. Your child should be responsible for such items as gym sneakers, musical instruments, paper, pencils, money, lunches, library books, and textbooks. If possible, please have your child's property clearly marked with name and grade. We discourage students from bringing expensive items (for example, cell phones, video games, trading cards, favorite toys, etc.) to school. These types of items can be distracting and may be disruptive to classroom instruction. In addition, the school cannot be responsible for monitoring these items to make certain that they are not traded, lost, borrowed, damaged, or stolen. If these types of items are brought to school, they may be confiscated and you may have to come to school to pick up the item. Please see the CCPS policy on Personal Electronic Devices.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS):

Any student not meeting with success in the classroom for academic or behavioral reasons may be referred to the MTSS Team. This team is made up of teachers, administrators, the school nurse, the special education building coordinator, and the school counselor, Title 1 resource teachers, the school psychologist, and the school pupil personnel worker. Team members suggest strategies to help the student to be more successful. If it is determined necessary by the team, a student may be referred for special education testing or a behavioral or academic intervention plan may be developed. If a child has a diagnosed disability and does not qualify for special education services, he or she may be evaluated for services through a 504 Plan. Parents are invited to be active participants of this process.

VISITORS/ CLASSROOM VISITATIONS:

Visitors are always welcome at Thomson Estates but must first report to the office upon entering the building. All visitors must sign-in and wear a visitor's pass. Teachers and staff have been instructed to stop any adults who are not wearing a visitor's pass. These individuals will be instructed to report to the main office to sign-in. Absolutely no exceptions will be made to this procedure. This is for the safety of all students and school staff. If you would like to visit your child's classroom to watch part of the instructional day, there are two ways for this to occur. First, all families will be encouraged to visit the school during National Education Week which is held annually in November. This is a wonderful opportunity to see your child "in action" in his or her classroom. This is also an opportunity for families to see the tremendous reading, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts and physical education programming available to your student every day. TEES will send out more detailed information about National Education Week in early November.

Outside of the National Education Week visitations, parents and/or guardians may desire to visit a classroom. These visits to the classroom must be arranged ahead of time and with approval from the teacher and building administration. A school administrator will accompany the parent or guardian to the classroom, will

remain for the duration of the visit, and will escort the parent from the classroom back to the office to be signed out. No more than two visitations per marking period which will be kept to a reasonable amount of time (no more than 45 minutes per visitation) can be arranged for the parent to see the flow of instruction and watch teacher/student interactions. This is for the safety and comfort of all of our students so that they can continue to focus on the daily lessons. Expectations describing the format, duration and frequency of visitations such as these are guided by Board of Education Policy and specifically **Regulation KK-RC: Visitors to Classrooms**. Visitors should not take photographs of the classrooms outside of structured events and activities such as National Education Week visits, classroom parties, field day activities, etc. This is for the protection and privacy of ALL TEES students. This process is for classroom visits, not for classroom volunteers. Please see the Volunteer section for details on the volunteer program.

When under covid restrictions, there will be no visitors allowed for students during lunch in order to reduce the risk of transmission. Otherwise, visitors who wish to have lunch with their child must contact the main office prior to arrival. The parent and/or guardian will remain in the main office until the student's class arrives in the cafeteria. After lunch, the parent and/or guardian may not go to the student's classroom unless previous arrangements have been made with the teacher and building administrators are available to accompany the family member on the visitation. Post-lunch scheduled visits will be limited to 15-20 minutes to allow students to return to their instructional focus. Visitors should not take photographs of the cafeteria outside of structured events and activities such as National Education Week visits, classroom parties, field day activities, etc. This is for the protection and privacy of ALL TEES students on typical school days.

When visiting the school, please **do not** park in front of the building in the driveway. It is absolutely necessary that the fire lane be kept open for buses, the mail truck, fire trucks, ambulances, etc. Please use the parking lot.

VOLUNTEERS:

Many hands make light work. Teachers appreciate parents who can assist in classroom duties on a regular schedule or for special events. Volunteers can read to and with students, prepare and hang bulletin boards, help organize classroom parties, and prepare materials for upcoming lessons (to name just a few tasks). Due to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), classroom volunteers may not perform tasks which would give them access to protected personal educational information of students. For example, volunteers cannot grade papers or record grades into a grade book, hand back scored papers, etc. Many volunteers become regular participants in the classrooms and have a knowledge of students above and beyond the typical parent. Therefore, it is the expectation that volunteers act in a positive and professional manner within the school and hold the confidentiality of student academic, behavioral, and social interactions as required by FERPA. Violations of student confidentiality, whether done verbally, in writing, or on social media, are taken seriously and may result in the immediate revocation of volunteering privileges. If you would like to help, but have a schedule that prevents you from coming into the classroom, please contact your student's teacher. Some preparation work may be available. Your student may be older, but early childhood teachers (Preschool, PreK, and Kindergarten) may have work for which they need additional help preparing (such as cut-outs). Consider helping these teachers as well.

In accordance with CCPS expectations, if a parent or guardian is interested in volunteering in the schools, they must participate in a volunteer training meeting conducted at TEES. In addition to this training session, all volunteers **MUST COMPLETE AND PASS** a criminal background check through Cecil County Public Schools prior to their beginning work in the classroom. As a part of this process, the sex offender registry is also checked. Parents must also participate in a mandatory reporter training (during the volunteer training) which explains what volunteers are expected to do if a student discloses an incidence of abuse or neglect.

WALKERS:

Parents who may be picking up their children from the walker door are not permitted to park on the premises unless arranged with school administration.

WEATHER EMERGENCIES:

In the event that school will be canceled, opened late, or delayed, families will be notified through the mass notification system via phone call in addition to text messages and email. (This information is gathered through the emergency card you fill out for each of your children. *Please be sure to contact the office if any of this information changes during the school year.*) Information can also be found on www.ccps.org and on CCPS Facebook and Twitter accounts. In addition, information is made available to the following media outlets: Television (channels 2, 11, and 13) and Radio (103.7 WXCY).

WEBSITE:

Please visit Thomson Estates Elementary School's home page at <https://www.ccps.org/tees>. The homepage is full of both school and classroom news! We hope that you find our homepage both informative and interesting.

WHO TO CALL:

Because of the complexity of our school programs, no one person knows all of the answers to all questions that may arise. To help you get the correct answer to your questions you should:

- **Call your child's teacher**, email, or send a note to get answers to questions about the classroom, schoolwork, homework, classroom behavior, or with questions concerning incidents that may have occurred..
- **Call the principal, assistant principal, or local support teacher** when referred by the teacher, for a problem not solved by the teacher, for special assistance with your child's learning or behavior problems, with questions on general school policies and/or activities, and concerns regarding curriculum or other school matters.
- **Call the school secretary** to report your child's absence if he/she has a contagious disease or will be absent due to a prolonged illness, to request assignments for your child to do at home, or to get general information about upcoming events.
- **Call the school nurse** to ask questions about medications or other health concerns.
- **Call the cafeteria manager** to inquire about school snack accounts, student access to snacks, or other aspects of the breakfast and lunch programs.
- **Call the Board of Education Office at (410-996-5400)** for answers to questions of a district-wide nature and for general information about our school system.

We look forward to a great school year!