

**STUDENT HANDBOOK & CODE OF CONDUCT  
2024-2025**

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<https://les.stephenscountyschools.com>

## Our Vision:

Liberty Elementary School will be a safe place where teachers and students want to be; where they aren't afraid to work hard, and where they reach their maximum potential.

## Our Code of Conduct:

Learn

Be Caring

Be Safe

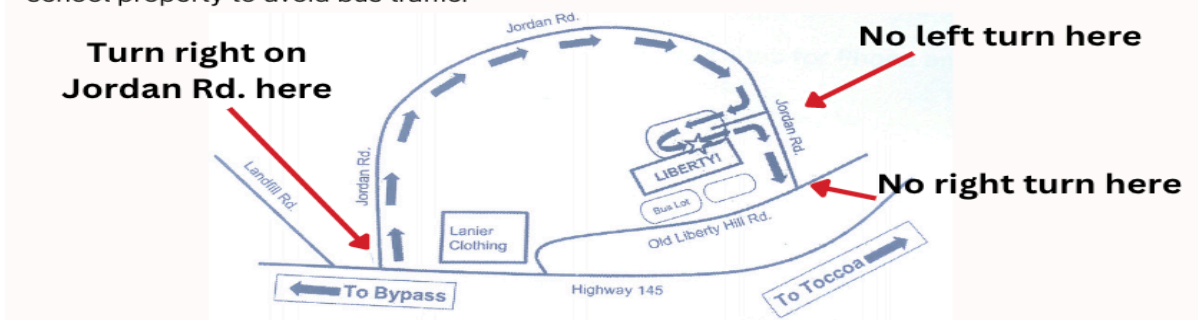
## Our Mission:

Quality Learning in a caring Environment where everyone is Safe

**Thank you for following these procedures for**

## **Student Drop off and Pick Up**

Students must be dropped off and picked up in the back parking lot of the school **only**. Access this area by turning right from Jordan road. **Parents must follow the same route for morning drop off and afternoon pick up.** **Please do not block driveways of residents on Jordan Road.** To avoid traffic back up on Old Liberty Hill Road with buses and cars, left turns into the pick up area will not be allowed. Turn left onto Old Liberty Hill Road when leaving school property to avoid bus traffic.



**The residents of Jordan Rd. respectfully request that you do not block their driveway.**

## **BELL SCHEDULE**

- 7:15 School opens (Breakfast is served)
- 7:45 Breakfast ends
- 7:50 Morning News–Live Broadcast
- 8:00 Tardy bell (School day begins)
- 2:45 Afternoon announcements
- 2:50 Car riders begin loading, first load buses exit campus.

Students who want to eat breakfast must arrive before 7:45 a.m.

Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. are tardy and must be walked into the office and signed in by an adult.

Students will not be dismissed through the office between 2:30 and 3:15.

## **AGENDAS**

Student agenda notebooks will be provided to all students. Agendas will be used for recording assignments and for school to home communication. Replacement cost for a lost agenda is \$5.00.

## **ATTENDANCE**

A student is considered absent any time he or she is missing from any assigned class or school activity, with or without parent permission. **Please review the BOE policy for attendance available at this link:**

<https://www.stephenscountyschools.com/district-information/board-of-education>. Click on School Board Policies

Learning builds each day, so a child who misses a day of school misses a day of learning.

Research shows that children who are in school most of the time perform better. When children are chronically absent they miss discussions, questions, and explanations by the teacher that makes learning come alive. That level of teaching and learning can't be made up.

Attendance matters as early as kindergarten. Studies show that many children who miss too many days of school often have trouble mastering reading by the end of third grade. By middle and high school, chronic absence is a leading warning sign that a student will drop out. When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating.

Regular school attendance is a law in Georgia. Parents and students must assume responsibility for being punctual and regular in school attendance. It is the position of the Stephens County Board of Education that each school day is important, and no student should be absent except for extraordinary reasons. Excessive tardiness and early dismissals interrupt the school day and can negatively impact student learning.

Consequences and Penalties of Unexcused Absences

When a student accumulates **5 unexcused absences**, the school will notify the parent/guardian of the consequences and penalties of such absences and that each subsequent absence shall constitute a separate offense. After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent/guardian, the school will send

written notice via first class mail or certified mail with return receipt requested. Once the letter is sent to the parent, the school has fulfilled its responsibility to notify the parent.

If a student accumulates a total of **ten absences or five unexcused absences**, an attendance support team meeting will be held at the student's school in order to discuss attendance, grades, and discipline. An attendance contract will be developed by the AST.

An attendance support team meeting may be held when a student accumulates **14 tardies** or early check-outs.

Once a student accumulates **10 unexcused** absences, the parent will receive a letter from the school social worker informing him or her that a court referral is being made to the Magistrate Court of Stephens County or the Juvenile Court of Stephens County. A copy of the letter will also be placed in the student's agenda.

At **15 unexcused absences** the parent will receive a letter from the school social worker reminding the parent of the importance of regular attendance.

If parents cannot be contacted by phone or letter, the school social worker and School Resource Officer will do a home visit in an effort to discuss attendance and get the contract signed. Parents who fail to respond to letters, phone calls, and home visits will be referred to the appropriate court.

### **AWARDS AND INCENTIVES**

At LES we value setting and achieving goals for attendance, behavior, and academics. Students who meet their goals will earn various awards throughout the year.

### **BEHAVIOR / CODE OF CONDUCT**

Students are expected to adhere to the BOE policy for student conduct. **Please review the BOE policy for student conduct available at this link:**

<https://www.stephenscountyschools.com/district-information/board-of-education>. Click on School Board Policies

The BOE Code of Conduct is effective during the following times and in the following places:

- At school or on school property at any time;
- Off school grounds at any school-related activity, function or event and while traveling to and from such events.
- On school buses and at school bus stops.

Major offenses including, but not limited to, drug and weapon offenses can lead to schools being named as an Unsafe School according to the provisions of State Board Rule 160-4-8-.16, Unsafe School Choice Options.

Parents are encouraged to become familiar with the Code of Conduct and to be supportive of it in their daily communication with their children and others in the community.

### **Liberty Elementary School Code of Conduct**

- Learn
- Be Caring
- Be Safe

Students are expected to abide by all rules and policies of Liberty Elementary School and the Stephens County Board of Education. The School-Wide Discipline Policy is designed to protect the instructional program for all students by eliminating disruptions and guiding students in accepting more responsibility for their own actions through self-discipline. Teachers will be firm, fair and consistent in enforcing the school's code of conduct. Parents are expected to reinforce the concept of proper conduct and high academic achievement.

### **Progressive Discipline Procedures**

When it is necessary to impose discipline, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process. The degree of discipline to be imposed by each school official will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior of a particular student and will take into account the student's discipline history, the age of the student and other relevant factors.

Disciplinary actions are designed to teach students self-discipline and to help them substitute inappropriate behaviors with those that are consistent with the school's code of conduct.

The following disciplinary actions may be imposed for any violation of this Code of Conduct as defined in the Stephens County Board of Education policy:

- Warning and/or Counseling with a School Administrative Counselor
- Loss of Privileges
- Isolation or Time Out
- Removal from Class or Activity
- Notification of Parents
- Parent Conference
- Opportunity Room
- Placement in an Alternative Education Program
- Short-term Suspension
- Referral to a Tribunal for Long-term Suspension or Expulsion
- Suspension or Expulsion from the School Bus
- Referral to Law Enforcement or Juvenile Court Officials: Georgia law requires that certain acts of misconduct be referred to the appropriate law enforcement officials. The school will refer any act of misconduct to law enforcement officials when school officials determine such referral to be necessary or appropriate.

### **BULLYING**

The Stephens County Board of Education believes that all students can learn better in a safe school

environment. Behavior that infringes on the safety of students will not be tolerated. Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Such prohibition shall be included in the Student Code of Conduct for all schools within the school system.

### **DRESS CODE**

Student dress and grooming shall be neat, clean, and appropriate.

- Students must wear shoes at all times. Shoes must be tied, buckled or worn as the manufacturer intended. Due to safety during P.E. and recess, students should not wear sandals without heel straps (flip-flops).
- Pajamas should not be worn to school unless it is a special dress up day.
- Offensive or suggestive writing or pictures on clothing are prohibited.
- Advertisements for alcoholic products, tobacco products, drugs, etc. will not be permitted on clothing worn to school or on book bags or hats that are brought to school.
- Hats, hoods, bandanas, or sunglasses may not be worn inside the building.
- Pants should be fitted at the waist at all times.

### **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

Our goal is that students are “prepared not scared” in the event of an emergency. Fire, severe weather, and lock down drills are held throughout the year.

### **EXTRA CHANGE OF CLOTHING**

All students need an extra change of clothing in their backpacks at all times. An extra change of clothes will prevent parents from being called to bring a change of clothing in the event of a spill or bathroom accident.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are taken at the discretion of the teacher in conjunction with the curriculum and upon approval of the principal and/or BOE. Parents will be notified in advance.

### **FINE ARTS**

Students participate in Fine Arts education through our art and music programs. Through these programs students have an opportunity to develop their own talents and skills while learning to appreciate and critically think about the artistic and musical contributions of others.

### **FOOD ALLERGIES**

It is the responsibility of parents to teach children how to be safe by avoiding foods to which they are allergic. Parents must communicate food allergies to the school nurse, teacher, and nutrition manager so that we can provide reasonable accommodations. **Because food allergies are very serious, students will not be allowed to share snacks or food.** Please teach your child the importance of not sharing food items.

## **GRADES**

1st and 2nd Grade students' progress is evaluated using a variety of assessments throughout the year. A standards-based report card that indicates a students' progress toward mastery of Georgia Standards of Excellence is issued at the end of each quarter.

ND = Not Developed (minimal progress towards the standard being assessed)

P = Progressing (progressing towards the standard being assessed)

M = Meets (meeting the standard being assessed)

E = Exceeds (exceeding the standard being assessed)

## **GUIDANCE COUNSELOR**

The purpose of the guidance program is to be of assistance to students, families, and teachers and to assist in making the educational process as effective as possible. Services provided are to help students be successful at school. The counselor does not provide therapy. Guidance/counseling services include classroom guidance, individual/group counseling, parent/teacher consultation, and referrals/coordination with agencies/professionals outside the school setting. Please feel free to contact the guidance counselor at any time.

## **INAPPROPRIATE ITEMS**

Cell phones, electronic games, trading cards, toys, etc. are not necessary to the instructional program. These items should be left at home. Students may not trade, buy, sell, or gift items at school. Any item not essential to the educational process will be confiscated and returned only to a parent or guardian. If a child must bring a cell phone for an after school event, it must be turned in to the office for safe keeping upon arrival and retrieved at the end of the day. The school is not responsible for items children bring to school.

## **LIBRARY BOOKS / INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Students are responsible for textbooks, library books and other books used in class. Per BOE policy, parents will be billed for the full replacement cost of lost, stolen, or damaged books / materials.

## **PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parent/Teacher conferences can be scheduled after school or during the teacher's planning time.

## **SCHOOL NURSE / MEDICATION**

The School Nurse coordinates the health services for Liberty Elementary. Students who have a signed nurse permission form will be allowed to see the nurse. If a child becomes ill at school, attempts will be made to notify parents. Parents of students with medical conditions or life threatening allergies should contact the nurse so that a care plan can be implemented.

Students who need to take prescription medicine on a short-term basis (two weeks or less) must provide a written request from the doctor or parent. Long-term prescription medication (two weeks or more) requires a long-term medication form to be completed by the parent and doctor. **All medication must be**



**brought to school by an adult and must be in the original container. Do not send medication on the bus or with the student.** Students are not to be in possession of medication at school.

### **SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR STUDENT USE**

Parents should provide and maintain supplies for student use. A list of supplies can be found on our school website, or contact your child's teacher. **Students must have a pair of headphones for personal use to fully participate in technology enhanced learning.**

### **SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER (SRO)**

The SRO assists the school administration in maintaining a safe and secure environment that is conducive to student learning. As a proactive and positive presence in the school, the SRO is a role model for students. It is important to note that the SRO is not involved in investigation of school rule violations or disciplinary actions. The SRO also provides a service to the surrounding community by addressing concerns such as loitering and stop sign or speeding violations in school zones. The SRO is responsible for investigating violations of criminal law.

**SNACKS / PARTIES / CELEBRATIONS** Liberty Elementary permits limited class parties for special occasions. Parents can send snacks to celebrate their child's birthday. Please communicate with the teacher in advance. **All snacks / birthday treats must be store-bought items with ingredient information available.**

### **STUDENT INFORMATION UPDATES**

Please promptly report any change of address, transportation information, or telephone numbers to your child's teacher. **Change of address must be updated at centralized registration at the district office.** This will allow us to contact you should an emergency occur. Please include at least 2 additional emergency contacts on enrollment forms and update as needed. When a student transfers to another school, the enrolling parent should come by the school office and complete the proper form. Your child's records will then be sent directly to your new school once a request for records has been received.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

#### **Parent Pick Up**

**Only individuals who are authorized on the student information sheet will be allowed to pick up students.** Teachers and staff will be on duty to help children get to the appropriate car. All parents should wait in cars until students are released for parent pick up. Students will not be called to the office for parent pick up. Students who will be transported by parents will be issued 2 name/number hang tags that must be used for verification when coming through the parent pick up line. For additional hang tags, you may purchase each for \$1. **Anyone without a hang tag will be required to show identification and wait for verification that he/she has permission to pick up the child.** Please do not try and avoid the parent pick up line by coming inside to pick up your child. Students will not be called to the office for

parent pick up from 2:30 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.. Students picked up prior to 2:50 p.m. will be counted as tardy (leave early).

**If a child is going home with another student, both students are required to bring a note from their parents/guardians.**

### **Changes in After School Plans**

Write a note in your child's agenda to inform the teacher of changes in transportation. In the event an emergency change needs to be made in mode of transportation, parents must call the office before 2:00 p.m. **We cannot guarantee that requests for changes to transportation made after 2:00 p.m. will be met.** If a change in bus transportation is requested, please include the address of the home where the student will be dropped off.

### **Bus**

Bus transportation is provided for all students in the Stephens County School system. Riding a bus is a privilege, not a right. Rules for riding the school bus have been established at the system level in an effort to provide safe transportation for all riders. Please discuss the importance of obeying these rules with your child. **Please review BOE policy for bus conduct.** Students who continually violate safety procedures may lose bus privileges.

Each bus driver has complete charge of the students riding in his/her bus. The bus driver may assign students to specific seats as necessary. Student misbehavior of any kind is not tolerated. Problems of a serious nature must be reported promptly to the administration of the school which the student attends. Bus drivers and school administrators will address problems with students according to the specified procedure given below which may result in suspension of the right to bus transportation or suspension from school.

### **General Bus Disciplinary Guidelines:**

1st Offense: Written warning from bus driver to student and parent.

2nd Offense: Official warning from school administration to student and parent.

3rd Offense: 1 day bus suspension.

4th Offense: 2 day bus suspension.

5th Offense: 3 day bus suspension.

(Suspension length continues to increase with each continued offense. For more severe offenses, school administrators have discretion to implement immediate or longer suspensions to ensure bus safety).

Transportation problems of an unpleasant nature are not to be discussed on roads or bus stop locations while students are being transported. These problems should be discussed with the principal of the student and the bus driver if necessary.

When access to transportation by bus is denied to a student, this denial does not change the requirement of attendance at school. Under such a condition, it is the responsibility of the parent to transport the student to school. The principal or assistant principal may restore access to transportation by bus to a student as justified. Students shall receive instructions on safe riding practices while on the bus and emergency evacuation procedures on an annual basis.

### **VISITORS**

**All visitors must check-in through the main office, sign-in, and wear a visitor's badge while in the building.**

Parents can bring lunch and eat with their child in a designated area. Please call the school office in advance. Only those listed on the student information sheet will be allowed to eat lunch with students.

### **WEAPONS**

The presence of weapons on school property is detrimental to the welfare and safety of the students and school personnel, and is a violation of state law. It is the policy of the Board of Education that a student shall not possess, use, handle or transmit any object that reasonably can be considered a weapon on property or in a building owned or leased by a school district, at a school function, or on a bus or other transportation provided by the school district.

### **NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION**

The Stephens County School System does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, age, national origin, marital status, or handicap (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Rehabilitation Act of 1973) in educational programs or activities receiving federal assistance. Employees, students, and the general public are hereby notified that the Stephens County Board of Education does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities or employment policies. Inquiries, concerning the application of Title VI, Title IX, or Section 504 in regard to the policies and practices of this board, may be addressed to the Principal.

### **TITLE I**

Liberty Elementary is a Title I School. We maintain a comprehensive school improvement plan and a parental involvement policy. Each of these is reviewed annually and revised with input from parents, staff and community. Each parent/guardian is invited to attend the annual Title I meeting that is held in the fall. Parents will be notified of the meeting date. Parents are encouraged to attend and be informed of the academic progress of our school, the goals and objectives of the improvement plan, as well as opportunities for parental involvement. The parental involvement policy will be available throughout the year. If you have questions or wish to receive an additional copy, contact the school principal. As a parent you also have the right to know if your child's teacher meets the criteria to be "highly qualified." This information will be given to you when school starts. If you have any questions, please contact the principal at (706) 886-3934 or at [connie.yearwood@stephenscountyschools.org](mailto:connie.yearwood@stephenscountyschools.org).

**Title 1 Parental Involvement** - Liberty Elementary values the contributions and involvement of parents in order to establish an equal partnership for the common goal of improving student achievement. Liberty

Elementary will host the following events to build the capacity for strong parental involvement to support a partnership among the school, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement. Notice of these events will be sent home with every student, posted on the school marquee, and announced through the school's automated call system.

**Annual Title I Meeting** - Parents are invited to attend and learn about our Title I program, including our parent involvement policy, the school wide plan, and the school-parent compacts.

**Open House** - Meet the teacher and explore the classroom

**Teacher-Parent Conferences** - Learn about your child's progress toward grade level expectations.

**Family Academic Nights and Title I School-Parent Compact & Parental Involvement Policy Reviews** - Participate with your child in fun hands-on academic activities and give input on all Title I school/parental documents.

Liberty Elementary and our families will develop a school-parent compact, which is an agreement that parents, teachers, and students will develop together that explains how parents and teachers will work together to make sure all our students reach grade-level standards. The compacts will be reviewed and updated annually based on feedback from parents, students and teachers. Each teacher, student, and parent must sign a document indicating that they have read the compact and are willing to abide by its contents.

Liberty Elementary is committed to helping our parents attend the parental activities listed in this plan. Please call us if you need assistance with childcare or transportation in order to participate in our programs (706) 886-3934.

### **CHARTER SYSTEM**

Stephens County Schools operate under a charter from the Georgia Department of Education. As a charter system, we have the opportunity to implement innovative ways to secure the best possible education for all our students. A School Governance Team (SGT) is composed of the school principal, two faculty members, two parents, and two business/community members. The SGT may make recommendations to the local board of education concerning the school's budget, resource allocation, personnel (specifically the principal), parental involvement, school improvement, curriculum, and school operations. The team will post the dates for monthly meetings and is subject to the Open Meetings Act and Open Records Act. The principal may be contacted at any time if a parent has suggestions for agenda items for an SGT meeting.

### **504 STUDENT RIGHTS AND PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is designed to prohibit discrimination based on disability in any program or activity receiving Federal money. This statute obligates public schools to provide equal access and equal opportunity to otherwise qualified persons with disabilities. To determine 504 eligibility, a student must demonstrate: as a result of an evaluation, to have a physical or

mental disability/impairment (or having a history of a physical or mental disability/impairment) that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

For more information regarding Section 504 Eligibility and Plan development process, contact your school SST/504 coordinator or the Stephens County System 504 Coordinator at the following address:  
191 Big A School Road  
Toccoa, GA 30577  
(706) 886-5609

Liberty 504 Coordinator:  
Ms. Carla Smith, Assistant Principal  
222 Old Liberty Hill Rd.  
Toccoa, GA 30577  
(706) 886-3934

### **HARASSMENT**

It is the policy of this school district to prohibit any act of harassment of students or employees by other students or employees based upon race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age or disability at all times and during all occasions while at school, in the workplace or at any school event or activity. Any such act by a student or employee shall result in prompt and appropriate discipline, including the possible termination of employment or suspension or expulsion of the student.

Any student, employee, applicant for employment, parent or other individual who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination by other students or employees of the school district as prohibited by this policy should promptly report the same to the principal of the school or to the appropriate coordinator designated in policy JAA/GAAA.

### **ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Stephens County Schools AHERA/Management Plan is available for public inspection upon request at the Stephens County Board of Education office located at 134 Industrial BLVD Ellijay, GA. This notification is provided to fulfill the requirement of section 763.93 (4) of the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, 40 CFR Part 763, October 30, 1987. All interested parents, teachers, employees or other persons are invited to review the plan which includes the following items:

1. Location, amounts and types of asbestos-contained materials in all schools and support buildings.
2. Response actions to the asbestos-contained materials, selected by the Stephens County School System.
3. Plans for reinspection, periodic surveillance and operation and maintenance programs.
4. Public Notification procedures.

Anyone interested in reviewing this plan should contact the Stephens County Board of Education at 706-886-9415.

### **PARENT'S RIGHT TO KNOW PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS AND PARAPROS**

In compliance with the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Liberty Elementary School would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s). The following information may be requested:

- 1) Whether the teacher has met the Georgia Professional Standards Commission's requirements for certification for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- 2) Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Georgia qualifications or certification criteria have been waived;
- 3) The college major and any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher;
- 4) Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

**If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's qualification, please contact Dr. Connie Yearwood (Principal – Liberty Elementary School).**